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most soulful bird—plus
four fine ways to cook it

PAGE 60



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A man in a dark sweater and light trousers stands on a wide, sandy beach at sunset. He is holding a long, thin stick or staff. The beach is wet, reflecting the golden light of the setting sun. In the background, the ocean waves gently lap at the shore, and a range of mountains is visible under a hazy, orange sky.

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SAVEUR



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BY MARGO TRUE

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A brined and roasted turkey—the other national bird.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES OSELAND

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BY GRACE YOUNG



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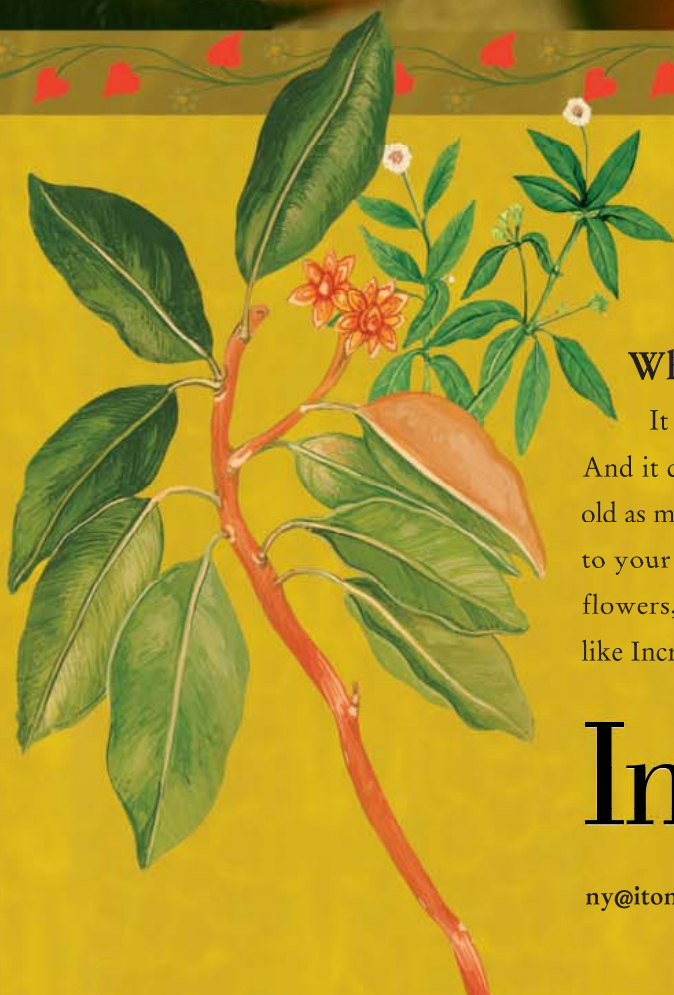
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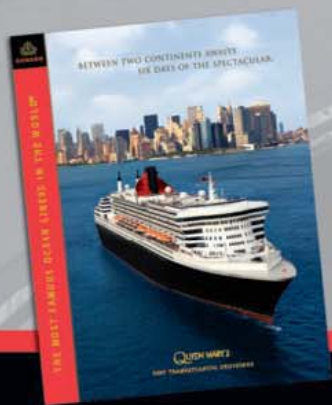
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FIRST

Green Beans and Gratitude

How a lesson in Chinese cooking transformed an American palate

BACK IN 1980, when I was 17 years old, my experience of food generally consisted of one of three things: my dad's Frenchified Sunday-night suppers, my mom's open-a-carton-or-can variety of cooking, or my own investigations into the joys of junk food. Then I met Tang.

An exchange student from Taiwan, Tang was a few years older than me and wore black cat-eye glasses that made her look as if she'd walked out of some 1950s Truffaut film. She rented a small room in San Francisco's Richmond District, not far from where I lived, and studied painting at a local art college, which was where I met her. Though Tang was born and raised in Taipei, her parents came originally from Shanghai, and they'd taught their daughter the fundamentals of that city's celebrated fare.

Once Tang found out that I was interested in her food, she invited me over regularly to eat. I'd watch, mesmerized, as she turned out dazzling three-course meals with a batterie de cuisine that was made up of little more than a Teflon skillet, two dented aluminum saucepans, and a plastic spatula. Then we'd sit down on the floor and feast on her beautiful cooking—Shanghainese classics like red-cooked pork and stir-fries spiked with slivers of salted vegetables that were as different from any food I knew as water is from air.

At the time, most of what Tang cooked seemed complicated; I never imagined that I'd be able to prepare it myself. One day, though, she concocted a dish that she thought I could master easily. "I'm making green beans," she said. "You can cook this one yourself, no problem." A short while later, the dish—a crisp stir-fry of green beans that we'd bought earlier that day in Chinatown—was finished. Its simplicity blew me away. I duplicated it at home to great success, and in the months to come I learned to make a number of other basic Tang-inspired

dishes, from steamed rock cod slathered with julienned ginger and scallions to eggs scrambled with tomatoes.

"Shanghai Surprise" (see page 48), an article this month by new *SAVEUR* consulting editor Grace Young about that city's dynamic food scene, got me to thinking about Tang. She returned to Taiwan in 1982, and over the next two decades I lost contact with her. But whether or not she was aware of it, the time I spent in her humble home



Stir-fried green beans à la Tang are a crisp and succulent treat.

opened my eyes to the world of cooking. For that I'll be forever grateful.

There's another reason I'm grateful this month: I recently became the editor-in-chief of this magazine, and the issue that you now hold marks my first handiwork. I hope you'll enjoy reading it (and cooking from it) as much as I did helping to create it. —*JAMES OSELAND, Editor-in-Chief*

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FARE

Explorers and Experimenters from the World of Food, plus Book Review, Agenda, and More

AGENDA

NOVEMBER

1

RÜEBLIMÄRT

Aarau, Switzerland

Aargau, in north-central Switzerland, could be called the canton of carrots. On the first Wednesday of November, stalls offering all manner of carrot-related food line the main drag of Aarau, the capital of this flat, fertile region. Visitors can get their fill of carrot bread, carrot soup, carrot marmalade, and the canton's famous carrot cake while stocking up on other local fall vegetables. Information:

62/824 7624.

NOVEMBER

3-4

GREENWOOD COUNTY CATTLEMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION

Eureka, Kansas

Mark the end of grazing season at this 80-year-old festival, where visitors still gather for classic breakfast grub at the Lions Club's Saturday-morning pancake feed and then attend a parade and a beef barbecue cook-off. Capping it all is the Cattlemen's Ball, on Saturday night, when members of the local 4H club serve brisket and homemade pies and cakes. Information: 620/583-0129.

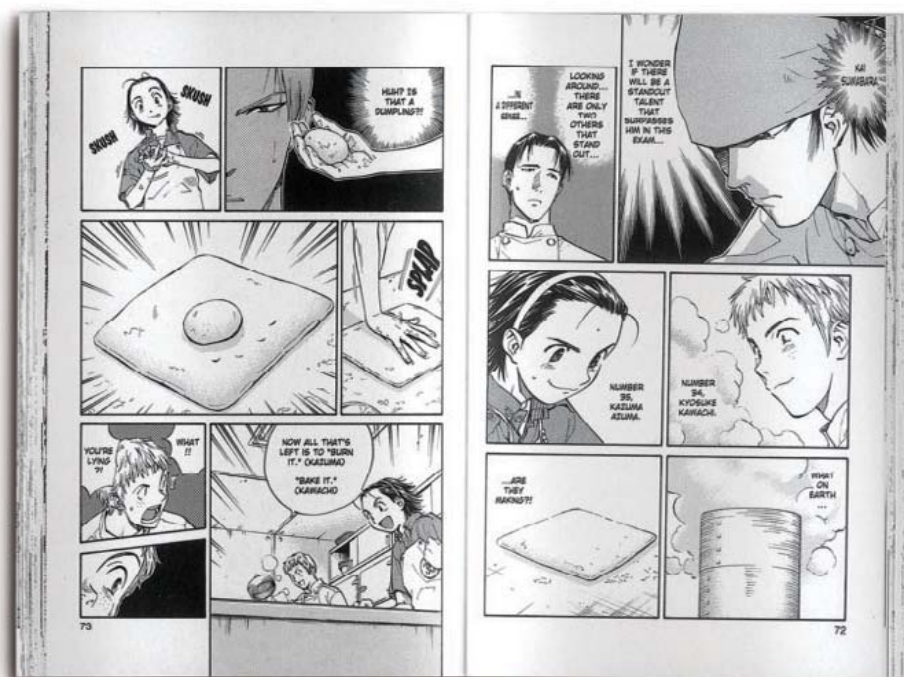
NOVEMBER

3-12

WURSTFEST

New Braunfels, Texas

This year the mayor of Braunfels, Germany, will visit that town's



Flour Powers

A Japanese comic book brings some *kapow!* to the culinary arts

MEET KAZUMA AZUMA, protagonist of *Yakitate!! Japan*, one of that country's most popular comic book series. In the opening panels, young Kazuma prepares to leave his family's rice farm to study baking in Tokyo, where he auditions for a job at a prestigious bakery. Struggling to further the cause of good bread in a country of rice lovers, Kazuma deploys his secret weapons: Hands of the Sun, his preternaturally warm palms, which create breads of superlative flavor and crumb.

Responding to soaring interest in Japanese anime and *manga* (comics) in the United States, publishers are introducing English-language editions of this Japanese niche phenomenon—food *manga*.

"It's definitely not a serious, introspective look into the world of baking," says Kit Fox, a *manga* editor at Viz Media, the company releasing the English-language edition. Indeed, *Yakitate!! Japan* (the title is a pun on the phrase "freshly baked bread") has all the wham-bam action of tradi-

tional comics, but behind the make-believe lies a meticulous attention to detail. The series creator, Takashi Hashiguchi, is said to have consulted a Kyoto baker to perfect the look of the artfully depicted breads, and the comic even includes recipes.

Intrigued? You're in luck: *Yakitate!! Japan, Vol. 2*, will be released on our shores this month. —Emily Kaiser

* The strips are written to be read right to left, top to bottom.

FARE

Maine's Buckwheat Treats

Part pancake, part crêpe, part flat bread—100 percent Acadian

sister city in Texas for the 46th annual Wurstfest. The German-Texan celebration features 50 kinds of sausage, plus kartoffel puffers (potato pancakes), kolaches (rolls filled with sausage), schnitzels, and strudels of all kinds. After the ritual “biting of the sausage” at the opening ceremony,



locals dance in lederhosen and dirndls as the *Spassmeister* (fun master) animates the crowd. Information: 800/221-4369.

NOVEMBER

4-5

SOIL ASSOCIATION ORGANIC FOOD FESTIVAL

Glasgow, Scotland

Organic haggis, anyone? This festival, the first of its kind in Scotland, which accounts for more than half of the UK's organically managed land, will be held in Glasgow's recently restored Old Fruitmarket. Sample organic foodstuffs, from cereal, beer, and butter to venison, chocolate, and artisanal cheese. Leading Scottish chefs will conduct talks, and a tasting program will feature products from nearby farms. Information: 44/131 666 2474.

NOVEMBER

4-11

SWEET POTATO FESTIVAL

Vardaman, Mississippi

Everyone from Vardaman comes home for the Sweet Potato Festival. At the end of harvesttime, the town's population swells from 1,006 to nearly 20,000, padded by visitors who sell, bake, eat, decorate, and generally venerate the hometown tuber. A tasting booth offers plates of sweet potato creations, from bonbons to sausage balls. Bring a truck if you have one—15,000 pounds of potatoes will be for sale. Information: 662/682-7559.

NOVEMBER

11

LA FOIRE AUX HARENGS DE LIEUREY

Lieurey, France

Legend has it that during the Hundred Years' War a shipment of

IT'S NOT THAT you can't get pancakes in northern Maine's St. John Valley, but why would you want to? Here, in the traditionally French-speaking region of Acadia, odds are that those griddle cakes you see locals eating aren't flapjacks but ployes. Long a part of Acadian food culture, ployes (the name rhymes with “boys”), beloved on both sides of the Maine-Canada border, are easy to make but hard to categorize. Thought to have evolved from the buckwheat-based galettes of northern France, the ploye is part pancake, part crêpe, part flat bread. Like crêpes, they lend themselves to both sweet and savory toppings. Royden Paradis, a cook at a Maine logging camp for 36 years, recalls making towering stacks of them nearly every day. “We’d set out plates of them, and the men would eat them with maple syrup, beans, soup, gravy, cretons [a traditional Acadian pork pâté]—just about anything.”

Ployes are made from a mixture of white flour and flour derived from silverskin buckwheat, a variety that grows well in cool, northern climates. The buckwheat is harvested in early September and then milled into a flour that imparts a distinctive, yellowish tint to food. Since traditional ployes aren't



flipped, they tend to be smooth on one side and cratered like a lunar landscape on the other.

If ployes remain a part of north-

ern Maine's food culture, that is largely due to the efforts of one farming family, the Bouchards of Fort Kent, who sowed opportunity when most of their potato-farming colleagues were harvesting nothing but trouble. In the early 1980s, as potato prices were falling sharply, Rita and Alban Bouchard, seeking to diversify, converted 75 of their 350 acres to the resilient buckwheat.

In 1983, the Bouchards decided

Making a giant ploye at the Ployes Festival, held in annually in Fort Kent, Maine, left. Above, ployes with cretons.



FARE

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



"I'm about as lonesome as a biscuit without some gravy."

—VIRGINIA HAMILTON, "MIZ HATTIE GETS SOME COMPANY", *HER STORIES: AFRICAN-AMERICAN FOLKTALES, FAIRY TALES, AND TRUE TALES*

to package their own ployes mix as a way of embracing their Acadian roots and supplementing their income. Twenty-three years later,

the Bouchards are selling the mix in some of New England's largest grocery chains and all over the country, via the Internet. They have also been instrumental in organizing the annual Ployes Festival, held in August, which culminates in the making of a supersize ploye (this year's was 12 feet in diameter).

"By providing an authentic ployes mix that's easy for people to obtain and make," says Rita Bouchard, "we feel like we're helping people hold on to a little part of their culture." Call it a buckwheat-driven Acadian cultural revival, but, *s'il vous plaît*, don't call it a pancake. (For a source for ployes mix, see *THE PANTRY*, page 106.) —Roger Doiron

RECIPE

Ployes with Cretons

(Buckwheat Crêpes with Pork Pâté)

SERVES 6

Resist the urge to substitute regular buckwheat flour for silverskin buckwheat flour—the color, flavor, and texture will be entirely different.

1 lb. rendered lard
 1 lb. leaf lard, membrane removed and discarded, finely chopped
 1 small yellow onion, finely chopped
 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
 1½ lbs. ground pork
 ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
 ⅛ tsp. freshly ground nutmeg
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
 1 cup silverskin buckwheat flour (light buckwheat flour; see page 106)
 ½ cup all-purpose flour
 2 tsp. baking powder

1. Heat lards in a medium cast-iron pot over medium heat, about 25 minutes. (The leaf lard will render during this time.) Reduce heat to low; carefully add onions and garlic; cook until softened, 4–5 minutes. Add pork, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt and pepper; break up with a wooden spoon. Stir in 1 cup water. Gently simmer, covered, stirring occasionally, for 6 hours. Let cool slightly. Blend pork mixture in a food processor in batches until smooth. Adjust seasonings. Transfer the cretons to small containers; refrigerate or freeze until ready to use. (If freezing, cover the surface with wax paper before sealing the container.)

2. Beat together 1½ tsp. salt, flours, baking powder, and 2 cups water in a bowl. Let batter rest for 5 minutes. Heat a large cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. Working in batches, pour about 3 tbsp. batter into middle of skillet; swirl around to form a 6" circle. Cook until bubbles, or "eyes", form on the surface of the ployes and surface is cooked, about 1 minute. Wait 30 seconds more (if you move them too early they'll stick). Run a spatula underneath to release. Stack ployes on a plate as they're done. (Stir batter in between batches to remix.) Allow cretons to warm slightly, then spread onto warm ployes.



AU REVOIR, ESCOFFIER

A growing culinary movement in France puts the emphasis on *liberté*

THE LANGUAGE POLICE AT l'Académie Française must be piqued. In a tongue already riddled with terms borrowed from English—from *le football* to *le weekend*—a new anglicism has found its way into daily parlance, and it doesn't appear likely to go away. *Le fooding*—that's *food* and *feeling* mashed together—is a term coined in 1999 by journalist Alexandre Cammas to denote what he saw as a new approach to cuisine in France. Today Le Fooding is a full-fledged movement with numerous adherents across the country.

Le Fooding is most easily defined by what it's against—namely, the rigid categorization that has long typified France's cooking, especially since the publication of the two holy books of French cuisine: Auguste Escoffier's *Le guide culinaire* (1903) and Prosper Montagné's *Larousse gastronomique* (1938). Cammas has pointed out that the word *gastronomic* is derived from the Greek word for regulate, administrate, and

F A R E

herring destined for the citizens and soldiers of Orléans was stopped in Lieurey by a snowstorm. The locals had no choice, of course, but to eat all the fish. Each year, on the feast day of Saint Martin, Lieurey relives that day of good fortune. The streets teem with stalls selling pickled and grilled herring, and restaurants add herring dishes to their menus. At midday, step up for the herring-eating contest—the record stands at two and a half pounds. Information: 33/23 257 9038.

N O V E M B E R

30

Birthday:

NILS GUSTAF DALÉN

1869, Stenstorp, Sweden

One evening in 1913, after noticing his wife struggling to keep their wood-burning stove lit, the Nobel



Prize-winning physicist Nils Gustaf Dalén was inspired to design an easy-to-control, fuel-efficient stove. The handsome cast-iron stove he ultimately

invented burned peat and oil and radiated heat evenly from an insulated firebox; the product soon appeared in homes across northern Europe. Today the iconic ranges derived from Dalén's design are manufactured in Britain by Aga, and many models still use Dalén's original heating system, though they no longer burn peat.

N O V E M B E R

30

Anniversary:

PUBLICATION OF THE JOY OF COOKING

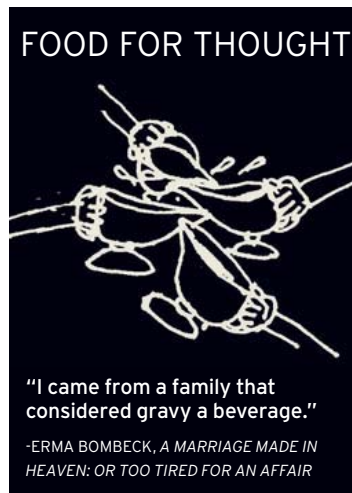
1931, St. Louis, Missouri

It was the height of the Depression when Irma S. Rombauer self-published 3,000 copies of *The Joy of Cooking: A Compilation of Reliable Recipes with a Casual Culinary Chat*. Readers instantly responded to Rombauer's clear, well-organized recipes and to her no-nonsense charm. In the years, and many editions, since then, *Joy* has certainly evolved—the first edition included a recipe titled “Shrimp Wiggle”—but its original spirit lives on.

standardize. “Feeling,” Cammas explains, “is completely opposed to regulation and administration.”

Camas believes there is a place for formal restaurants serving classic French cuisine—the kinds of establishments favored by the Michelin Guide—but thinks that young and daring chefs deserve stars as well. “In France, we have the know-how, we have the heritage, but we lack the freedom. That’s what Le Fooding is for.”

Not surprisingly, Le Fooding defies labels. Is it nouvelle cuisine? Yes. Fusion? Indeed. Experimental? That too. Traditional country cooking? Could be. Everything goes, as long as it’s made with good



ingredients and good intentions.

To spread their message, Cammas and fellow journalist Em-

manuel Rubin started a nonprofit organization called Le Bureau du Fooding, which holds events all over France, including Le Grand Fooding d’Été, a giant summer picnic. The Paris picnic took place this past summer not far from the place de la Bastille—a site not unfamiliar with citizens’ upsetting the old order—and attracted some three thousand people, who enjoyed dishes like potato salad mixed with coffee vinaigrette and crumbled cocoa pods and “provençal” yakisoba noodles with something called “Bull-Dog Tyuno” sauce. *Vive la révolution!* (For information, see *THE PANTRY*, page 106.) —Catherine Bolgar

B O O K R E V I E W

Cakey, Fudgy, Chewy

With a wholesome new tome, a doyenne of American baking comes into her own

BY TAMASIN DAY-LEWIS

BAKING IS THE HEART and hearthstone of Dorie Greenspan’s life. A long career of making crusts, tarts, and crumbles alongside luminaries like Julia Child (Greenspan wrote the best-selling *Baking with Julia*) and French pastry chef Pierre Hermé, her longtime friend and collaborator, has given the noted baking authority ample fodder for filling the 500-plus pages of her new book, *Baking: From My Home to Yours*. After a lifetime of working with top-notch professionals as a writer, teacher, and recipe interpreter, Greenspan could, in a sense, regard this book as her coming-out party.

Although the secrets she’s gleaned from earlier collaborations are among the book’s most tempting offerings, *Baking* is at its best when Greenspan delivers on the folksy premise conveyed by the book’s title. Throughout, the author of-

fers instructions for treats she likes to bake for friends and family and describes with genuine relish the intoxicating scent of a particular cake or cookie.

Influenced by purists like Hermé, Greenspan



TAMASIN DAY-LEWIS has written for *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*. She also hosts her own cooking show in the United Kingdom.





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FARE

has been instrumental in banishing Crisco, margarine, and other noxious oils and emollients from many American kitchens. I, too, am a passionate home baker who tries to avoid commercial goods made with questionable ingredients; so, what a relief, indeed a pleasure, it was to read these magic words in one of Greenspan's many sidebars: "Butter is my first choice for biscuits and scones because it is delicious"—a refreshingly blunt declaration.

Herein lies the goodness, if you will, of this

cookbook: in addition to the sidebars, each chapter has an introduction containing useful tips for both the novice and the experienced baker. In the section on cakes, Greenspan admonishes, "When it's time to test for doneness, don't even think about using a measly toothpick.... Grab a slender paring knife." In the section on cookies, she cautions, "Always start with a cool baking sheet—pull one that's just out of the oven, and your dough will ooze and melt before it bakes." For the most part,

RECIPE

Thanksgiving Twofer Pie

MAKES ONE 9" PIE

This two-for-one pie bakes our two favorites (sorry, mincemeat) into one delicious combo. This recipe is an adaptation of one in *Baking: From My Home to Yours* by Dorie Greenspan (Houghton Mifflin, 2006).

FOR A 9" SINGLE CRUST:

1½ cups all-purpose flour
2 tbsp. sugar
¾ tsp. salt
1¼ sticks (10 tbsp.) very cold (frozen is fine) unsalted butter, cut into tbsp.-size pieces
2½ tbsp. very cold (frozen is even better) vegetable shortening, cut into 2 pieces

FOR THE PUMPKIN FILLING:

1 cup canned unsweetened pumpkin purée
⅔ cup heavy cream
½ cup packed light brown sugar
1 egg
1 egg yolk
2 tsp. dark rum

½ tsp. pure vanilla extract

½ tsp. ground cinnamon

¼ tsp. ground ginger

¼ tsp. salt

FOR THE PECAN FILLING:

½ cup light or dark corn syrup
¼ cup packed light brown sugar
2 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
1 egg
1 egg yolk
½ tsp. pure vanilla extract
¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
⅛ tsp. salt
1½ cups (about 7 oz.) pecan halves or pieces

1. For the crust: Put flour, sugar, and salt into a food processor; pulse to combine. Drop in butter and shortening; pulse to cut into flour. What you're aiming for is to have some pieces the size of fat green peas and others the size of barley. Pulsing, gradually add about 3 tbsp. ice water—add a little water and pulse once, add some more water, pulse again; keep going that way. Then use a few long pulses to get water into flour. If, after a dozen or so pulses, the dough doesn't look evenly moistened, pulse in up to 1 tbsp. more ice water, to get a dough that will stick together when pinched. Shape dough into a disk; wrap in plastic. Refrigerate 1 hour.

2. For the pumpkin filling: Pulse all ingredients together in a food processor. Leave filling in bowl.

3. For the pecan filling: In a bowl, whisk together all ingredients except pecans until smooth.

4. Preheat oven to 450°. Roll dough out to a 12" circle on a floured counter, turning dough over frequently; keep counter floured. Slide dough into the fridge for about 20 minutes to rest and firm up. Fit dough into a buttered 9" pie plate; cut excess dough to a ¼"-½" overhang. Fold dough under itself, so that it hangs over the edge just a tad, and flute or pinch the crust to make a decorative edge.

5. To assemble: Give the pumpkin filling one last quick pulse, then remove bowl, rap it on counter to debubble batter, and pour filling into crust. Top pumpkin filling evenly with pecans, then pour over pecan filling. Poke down any pecans that float to the top and aren't covered with filling. Bake pie for 10 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 300° and bake for another 35-40 minutes, or until it is evenly puffed and a slender knife inserted into the center comes out clean. Transfer pie to a cooling rack and let it stand until it is just warm or until it reaches room temperature.

a feast for the holidays



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Sweet and Spicy **Australian Lamb Leg** Tagine with Warm Couscous

1½–2 lb. boneless Australian Lamb leg
 1 tsp ground cumin
 1 tsp ground cinnamon
 1 tsp ground ginger
 1 tsp ground coriander
 2 tbsp olive oil, divided
 1 onion, chopped
 1 leek, white part only, sliced
 2 medium carrots, chopped
 1½ cups chicken stock or broth
 ½ cup raisins or sliced dates
 2 large tomatoes, coarsely chopped
 1 pear, diced
 cooked couscous, warm
 ¼ cup toasted almonds or pine nuts
 salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

1. Trim and dice lamb into bite-size pieces. Combine next 4 ingredients and divide in half. In a heavy-based skillet, heat 1 tbsp of oil over high heat, add the lamb and half the spices. Cook, stirring until browned. Transfer lamb to a plate and drain fat from pan.

2. Heat remaining oil and spices in the same pan over medium heat about 20-30 seconds. Add onion, leek and carrots. Cook until onion is softened. Return the meat to the pan with the stock, raisins and tomatoes and stir well. Cover, reduce heat to low, simmer for 1 hour.

3. Add pear and simmer, uncovered, for 20-30 minutes or until lamb is tender and sauce is thick. Spoon tagine over the warm couscous, sprinkle with the almonds and serve.

Check out our **NEW website** for easy and delicious Australian Lamb recipes, store locations, free offers and sweepstakes. It's all here at www.australian-lamb.com/sa



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FARE

Greenspan's tips and recipes produce exactly the results she tells the reader to expect. That should give confidence to the cook who hasn't yet graduated from the beginner slopes.

Greenspan's instructions are concise and well edited, which makes up for the sometimes rambling recipe headnotes and for certain sections that I considered to be a little overstuffed with recipes. Whether the reader really needs more than a dozen recipes for brownies is a matter of personal predilection, I suppose. I prefer her approach in the sections on cheesecakes and sablés, in which the author suggests variations in extensive sidebars instead of devoting entire recipes to closely related items.

While Greenspan's recipes are mostly winning, I was greeted with less than enthusiastic responses to certain entries when I prepared them for family and friends (though, truthfully, in the realm of baking, dissent often arises from individual taste and not from flaws inherent in the product). I made the French lemon cream tart that Greenspan credits to Hermé and got disparate reactions. An American friend loved its creaminess and felt it had a comfortingly familiar texture; a British friend, accustomed to a more classic tarte au citron, said he missed the traditional sharp, gel-like custard.

The recipe titled "Rick Katz's Brownies for Julia" elicited similarly mixed reactions; despite my misgivings about the two cups of sugar the recipe called for, I did just as I was told. Once again my American friend approved, saying they were just how his mother used to make them, though he quibbled over their being "cakey", not "fudgy" as the recipe promised. My 17-year-old daughter, a brownie connoisseur, refused to eat hers, complaining that she could taste only the sugar, not the chocolate.

Such moments of unevenness should not imply that Greenspan's skill at recipe writing is less than consummate. Still, younger readers might tire of her down-home voice. The pages are sugared with cute monikers like "cocoa-nana bread", "corniest corn muffins", and "chunky peanut butter and oatmeal chocolate chipsters"; and, reading the recipe preambles, I developed a case of adjective fatigue: in addition to the aforementioned "fudgy", I came across "goosey", "chewy", "syrupy", "craggy", "bumpy", "chunky", "tangy", and "crunchy", among other descriptives. This is all of a piece with the slightly dated page design and the earnest title.

But these are merely matters of style.

Unremittingly wholesome though it may be—after all, it is a cookbook about desserts, not fusion cuisine—*Baking: From My Home to Yours* is undeniably authoritative and thorough, and I have no doubt that I'll keep it on my shelf and bake with Greenspan for years to come. 

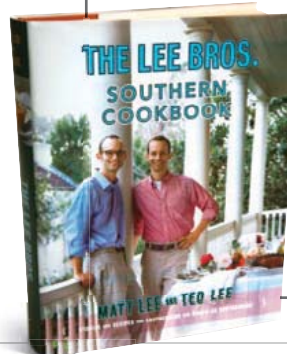
Baking: From My Home to Yours by Dorie Greenspan (Houghton Mifflin, \$40).

Southern Comfort

The Lee brothers, Matt and Ted, hail from Charleston, South Carolina, but weren't born there—a nitpicky distinction that only an old-guard snob might still make. Thankfully, most residents of the Holy City no longer give a toot whether your great-granddaddy raised cotton or sold carpetbags. In *The Lee Bros. Southern Cookbook: Stories and Recipes for Southerners and Would-Be Southerners* (W. W. Norton & Company, \$35), the duo intersperse recipes with homey anecdotes about Lowcountry home cooking—the lard-and-bacon-fat-laden bounty that's served in both pillared houses and unpainted shacks but is rarely well executed in fancy-pants restaurants. (Until recently, proper Charlestonians ate out only occasionally, and it was generally taken on faith that grandmothers would pass on their home recipes. But the Lee brothers have recognized that customs are changing.) In 1994, the brothers—homesick after moving to Manhattan—launched a quirky Southern-foods mail-order catalogue from their apartment; it has since grown into a journalism career and satellite-radio show. In this, their first book, the Lees wax nostalgic for old-time preparations that Lowcountry natives relish: innards-studded chicken bog and she-crab soup, as well as Junior League hostess favorites like tomato aspic. They also acknowledge the region's evolving ethnic landscape with dishes like cheese-grits chiles rellenos and detour beyond Dixie altogether with recipes for peach sake and Harlem meat loaf. Nevertheless, whether you were born in the pluff mud or not, you'll find that this cookbook playfully renders the region's best foods. Granted, the Lees take a few liberties with classic preparations—adding

Spanish pimentón (smoked paprika) to a baked red rice pilau, for instance, and garam masala to Country Captain chicken curry—but only a hide-bound traditionalist would take exception to these embellishments.

—Shane Mitchell





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THE SAVEUR LIST

10 Tabletop Goods

Handsome pieces like these make setting the table a pleasure

AROUND THIS TIME of year, a lot of magazines start parading out compendia of hot, hip items for embellishing holiday tables. While we love the idea—and the practice—of setting an appealing spread, truly worthy tableware has less to do with the wow! factor than it does with craftsmanship, utility, and good looks. With

that in mind, we assigned ourselves the task of compiling this small assortment of pieces representing a range of prices and categories. We browsed catalogues, rummaged through stores, and rooted around our own kitchen shelves to come up with a selection of serving goods that are smart, timeless, and, well, very *SAVEUR*. (See *THE PANTRY*, page 106, for sources.)

1 | MOROCCAN TEA GLASSES \$7–\$12 *each*. In Morocco, meals often end with sweet mint tea served in small, ornate glasses—a traditional North African gesture of hospitality. These intricately decorated tea glasses, which come in a variety of sizes and patterns, evoke the grace of the ritual and are also ideal for serving just about any other beverage.

2 | SIMON PEARCE BROOKFIELD BAKEWARE \$90. This sturdy baking dish, which takes its cue from 18th-century American stoneware, is a recent addition to the Vermont company's collection of glass and pottery. We adore it because it's practical (it can go safely from oven to table to freezer) and because it's so darned pretty.

3 | DALE LARSON BOWL \$115–\$600 *each*. Oregon-based artist Dale Larson fashions each of his remarkable vessels from local wood, much of it native to the Pacific coast. His pieces, like the Big Leaf Maple bowl, subtly evoke the sylvan beauty of the Pacific Northwest. They remind us of big trees—and big salads.

4 | CHEZ PANISSE DINNERWARE \$146/*four-piece set*. Under the auspices of Heath Ceramics, a Sausalito, California company started by Edith Heath in 1948,

designer Christina Kim and chef Alice Waters created this line of dinnerware—including a dinner plate, a dessert plate, a side bowl, and a “café” bowl—for use in Waters's famous Chez Panisse restaurant in Berkeley. Almost any food looks stunning when placed on these pleasing, ginger-colored pieces.

5 | JOHN DERIAN PLATTER \$185. Sometimes practicality simply must surrender to beauty. For the refined *découpage* items in his History of Plants line, designer John Derian drew on his extensive collection of meticulous 19th-century nature illustrations. This felt-bottomed platter isn't washable, but we didn't really want to put cooked food on it anyhow (though it makes a fine holder for fruit or bread). Just call it eye candy.

6 | FISHS EDDY GREEN BAND OVAL PLATTER \$18. Leave it to the folks at Fishs Eddy, the vintage-minded New York-based tableware purveyor, to resurrect this pattern, which evokes the heyday of the roadside diner. Unabashedly utilitarian, the platter is made of industrial-strength china, and its clean, classic shape makes us think at once of comfort.

7 | CRATE & BARREL NORA WINE-GLASSES \$7.95 *each*. The cost of a wineglass, as any seasoned dinner

host will tell you, is directly proportional to the probability that it will end up in shards. The Nora glass is a winner for its elegant form, to be sure, and its price means never having to say you're sorry.

8 | RAVENSCROFT TRUMPET DECANTER \$44. When we first came across this shapely, lead-free-crystal decanter at a local housewares store, it was being displayed as a vase, which is fine—really. But the vessel seemed to call out for wine; sure enough, the uniform, gently tapered spout and heavy bottom delivered a clean pour.

9 | WMF NORTICA FLATWARE \$40/*five-piece set*. Finding flatware with just the right heft proved challenging; so many utensils either sit in the hand like free weights or feel insubstantial. The stainless-steel Nortica utensils, however, meet the requirement, and their combination polished and brushed finish is gorgeously unfussy.

10 | VAGABOND VINTAGE FURNISHINGS NAPKINS \$80/*six-piece set*. While cloth napkins make some people think of daintily dabbing dames at *Age of Innocence*-era parties, they can be wonderfully practical, besides adding a little more texture to a table setting. The 26-inch-square, machine-washable cotton napkins in this set have the cozy feel of well-worn linen. —Kate Fox





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KITCHENWISE



Small Wonder

This diminutive kitchen has everything a cook could want

BY GEORGIA FREEDMAN PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

CREATING ATTRACTIVE living environments has long been a passion for Jenny Rogers, an interior designer, and her partner, Clove Galilee, an actress and choreographer. She and Galilee have remodeled every home they've lived in together, even when they were just renting. "We really love beautiful places," says Rogers.

The couple's interest in decorating has led them to such strenuous do-it-yourself endeavors as stripping paint off mahogany wainscoting,

repurposing second-hand furniture, and restoring a dilapidated Victorian house in Oakland, California, that had once belonged to the writer Jack London. The profits from their work on the Oakland home gave them the means to move from the Bay Area to New York City to pursue their careers. "We thought it was fitting that the house enabled us to be full-time artists," Rogers explains, "because Jack London wrote his first book in it."

Five years ago, when the couple started the process of looking for an

KITCHENWISE



apartment in Manhattan, they knew they'd need to adapt to less space than they were accustomed to. The 500-square-foot, two-room downtown studio into which they ultimately moved, however, was even smaller than they'd anticipated. They soon went about gutting the entire space. Not only was it tiny, notes Rogers, whose interior-design company is called Uncommon Abode, but "it was basically a falling-down shell". They began the renovation of the kitchen by knocking out most of the wall that separated that area from the apartment's main room. Though they'd planned to do the demolition themselves, they soon discovered that they were no match for the ten-inch-thick concrete walls, and they hired professional construction workers to do the job. They then framed the resulting opening and the kitchen's entryway with salvaged timber to lend a subtle raw element to the overall clean, modern look they were trying to achieve.

Size constraints dictated their choice of appliances, but the challenge of making a small kitchen appear spacious inspired them in other ways. They chose frosted-glass cabinets to add depth and covered what remained of the original room's dividing wall with Plexiglas to suggest greater space. The outer walls of the kitchen were painted in a variety of light blues, intended to evoke gradations of light and shadow, and the cou-



ple chose a framed map of the South Pacific to introduce a splash of color into the kitchen itself.

The first meal that Galilee and Rogers prepared in their new home was a Thanksgiving dinner for four. Galilee managed to make quiches and roast a small turkey in their 24-inch Verona oven by cooking in carefully timed shifts. Over time, though, Rogers and Galilee have learned that they don't have to relinquish any of their cooking habits; they entertain

frequently and even bake fairly often. Still, they have modified their techniques to make them suit the small space, placing cutting boards on the stove for more counter room, for instance, and prepping ingredients on the large table in the living room rather than in the kitchen.

To fit everything they need into the one small cabinet that serves as their pantry, they shop for ingredients that come in small packages. And to keep their narrow refrigerator uncluttered, they buy produce daily—as they like to do anyway. They also save space by restricting their appliances to just the basics (including a blender, a half-size food processor, and a rice cooker) and making do with only a few pots and pans. Nevertheless, they've had to tailor their menus strategically when they entertain. While they enjoy cooking full dinners for small groups, they limit the offerings at larger parties to hors d'oeuvres or simple snacks that they can make in batches. "I guess we could try cooking for a dinner party for 20," Galilee deadpans, "but that might get complicated." (For more information, see *THE PANTRY*, page 106.)

Great Divide (page 33, right). Rogers (right in photo) and Galilee's favorite thing about their kitchen is that an additional cook can stand on the other side of the counter and help prepare food without crowding the space—impossible when the original, full-size wall was there. They've also developed a habit of transferring some of their prep work to the large dining table, which they use as an extra countertop.

1. Little Gems Rogers and Galilee hadn't intended to go upmarket for their appliances, but they found that only luxury brands made items small enough for their space. They've relished the surprise benefits of these purchases, however, particularly the quality of the pie crusts that emerge from their professional-quality Verona oven.

2. Daily Bread With only a tiny cabinet and a narrow refrigerator, Rogers and Galilee have trained themselves to shop for smaller quantities of staples, condiments, and produce.

3. Beautiful Bargain After completing the kitchen construction and purchasing appliances, Rogers and Galilee realized they didn't have the wherewithal for a new floor, so they improvised, staining a sheet of birch-veneer plywood a deep chestnut brown.

4. Color Choice When choosing colors for their kitchen, Galilee and Rogers opted to keep everything as light and bright as possible. As a result, most of the color in the kitchen comes from objects they own (including an oil painting of a sunset)—and from the foods they cook.

Would you like to share your own kitchen design ideas with other SAVEUR readers? Send us photos of your kitchen, both overall and in detail, along with your name, address, and a few lines telling us what's special about it. Please note that unused submissions cannot be acknowledged or returned. Our address: Kitchenwise, SAVEUR, 304 Park Avenue South, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10010.

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CELLAR

Night for Day

Moulin-à-vent is an earthy, gutsy cru beaujolais

BY JOHN WINTHROP HAEGER

MOST BEAUJOLAIS IS a fruity bistro wine produced and consumed in thirst-quenching volume, always the best when young, and often served cool. But so-called cru beaujolais (the wines produced in ten small, specially designated areas in the northern part of the Beaujolais region) is quite a different beast. And of those crus, moulin-à-vent is as different from classic beaujolais as night is from day. In lieu of the freshly crushed strawberries and raspberries that are characteristic of beaujolais, moulin-à-vent murmurs darker red fruits, like cassia and cherries. Its hue is not rosy but deep garnet or even purple. Earthy, peppery, and spicy highlights occur frequently; minerality is omnipresent; and the best wines display a nice balance of respectable midpalate weight and elegant concentration. Moulin-à-vent can age nicely, like—well, *almost* like—a good red burgundy. Anomalous in one further respect, moulin-à-vent is the only one of Beaujolais's crus named not for a village but for a landmark: a hillside windmill dating from the 15th century.

Like classic beaujolais and the other crus, moulin-à-vent is made entirely from gamay. An offspring of pinot noir that Philip the Bold banished (unsuccessfully) from Burgundy in 1395, gamay is broadly

defined by a lightweight, low-tannin, fruit-forward profile, but the best wines of Moulin-à-Vent herald the variety's gutsier persona. There, thin, granitic midslope sites have checked gamay's natural tendency to throw a large crop, thus increasing both weight and intensity; veins of manganese in the appellation's subsoil have, according to local wisdom, reinforced its underlying richness; the best grapes achieve full ripeness in the vineyard, leaving no need for chaptalization (the adding of sugar to help fermentation); and, often, aging in small oak barrels has polished the fruit's primary edge. Classic beaujolais is the perfect complement to robustly flavored foods like charcuterie and strong cheese; moulin-à-vent (and some of its cru cousins), however, is best paired with direct, hearty fare like pot-au-feu and grilled beef. 



Tasting Notes

Here are 12 of the best moulin-à-vent wines that we've recently tasted; all are remarkable for their characteristic sultriness. See THE PANTRY, page 106, for sources.

DOMAINE DE LA ROCHELLE 2000 (\$30). A scent of figs, medjool dates, slightly raisined fruit, and dried leaves; cocoa-dusted fruit on the palate; strong minerality and some unresolved tannin. Pinotlike six years after the vintage, evoking gevey-chambertin.

DOMAINE DIOCHON CUVÉE VIEILLES VIGNES 2004 (\$19). Soft floral-herbal aromas buttressed with minerality, followed by intense flavors. Peppery spice overlays fresh cherries. A mature wine with fine-grained tannins.

DOMAINE DU GRANIT 2004 (\$20). Cocoa-dusted berry aromas, plus roses and violets, followed by pure strawberry in the mouth. Oaky sweetness that's counterbalanced by just a hint of weediness; lingering.

DOMAINE DU VISSOUX PIERRE-MARIE CHERMETTE ROCHEGRÈS 2004 (\$23). Ripe, red berry fruit overlaid with dill and fennel-frond aromas; then very intense red fruit and white pepper on the palate. An attractive, mouth-filling wine that finishes weightier than it begins.

GEORGES DUBOEUF DOMAINE DES ROSIERS 2004 (\$14). An earthy, herbaceous nose reminiscent of bay laurel; then, black and red raspberries; rich, ferric, and tannic in the mouth; herbaceous again on the finish.

GÉRARD CHARVET LA RÉSERVE D'AMÉLIE 2004 (\$18). Strawberry and raspberry aromas with mint and tarragon; slender and sinewy in the mouth, with great persistence and minerality.

JOSEPH DROUHIN 2005 (\$20). Strawberry-cherry and cotton candy flavors, supported by good midpalate weight. Classic young beaujolais with hints of the length and seriousness that mark moulin-à-vent.

LOUIS JADOT CHÂTEAU DES JACQUES CLOS DE LA ROCHE 2003 (\$30). Cocoa powder, barrel-derived vanilla, and very ripe fruit aromas; a sweet, plummy attack before roasted nuts; minerality and grip at the end. Impressive for its overall size, tightly knit structure, and good concentration.

LOUIS JADOT CHÂTEAU DES JACQUES CLOS DE ROCHEGRÈS 2003 (\$30). Aromas of black cherry and rose petal; then black-red fruits, cloves, and an undertone of minerality; pleasantly barrel-marked with sweet vanilla; some tenacity and good length.

MOMMESSIN LES CANNELIERS 2003 (\$17). A spice-driven nose that combines ripe strawberry, rose water, and resin; then a sweet, fruit-driven, almost plummy palate. Finishes intense and concentrated, with pronounced tannins. A good value.

MOMMESSIN RÉSERVE DU DOMAINE DE CHAMP DE COUR 2003 (\$27). Primarily floral aromas with hints of roasted nuts and some barrel marking; then fleshy and mouth-coating flavors of freshly crushed red berries and considerable spice.

POTEL-AVIRON 2004 (\$20). Aromas of ripe, briary fruit; cherry-raspberry flavors and gum-camphor overtones in a dry, mineral-rich package that finishes with nice structure and good grip. A handsome wine. —J.W.H.

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Chicken Corn Tortilla Soup

Makes 8 servings

- 1 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 4 cups water
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 4 cups reduced-sodium canned chicken broth
- 16 ounces fresh or frozen white corn
- 1 (10-ounce) can diced tomatoes with green chilies
- Corn tortilla chips
- 1 (8-ounce) package Cabot 50% Light Jalapeño Cheddar, grated



1. In saucepan, combine chicken breasts and water. Bring to gentle simmer and cook just until set in center.
2. Meanwhile, in medium skillet over medium heat, combine onion, garlic and oil; cook, stirring, until onions are tender. Set aside.
3. Transfer cooked chicken to plate to cool. Strain cooking liquid into another saucepan.
4. Add canned broth to cooking liquid and bring to simmer. Add corn and cook for 5 minutes. Add tomatoes and reserved onion mixture and cook until heated through.
5. In each of eight large soup bowls, arrange about 8 tortilla chips. Shred cooled chicken and divide among bowls. Ladle hot soup over chips and chicken; top with grated cheese.



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LIVES

Chocolate in the Rough

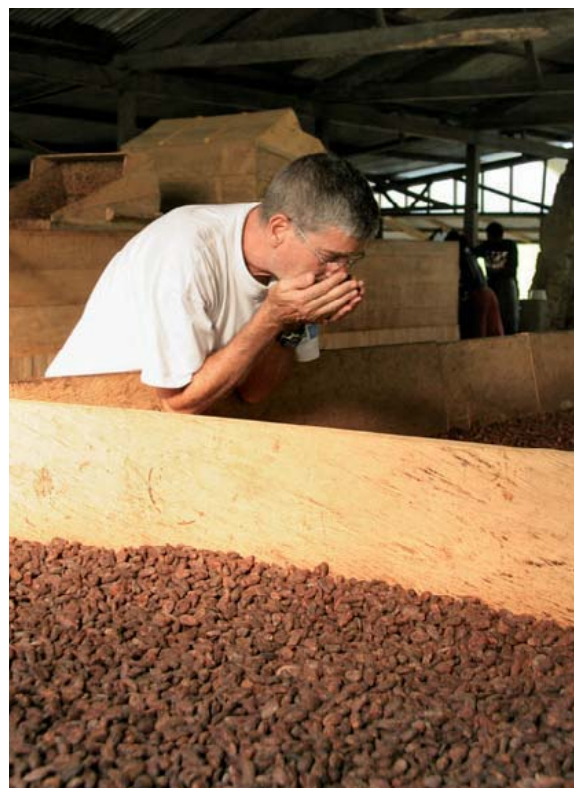
On an African island, a maverick chocolatier is developing a unique bean-to-bar operation

BY G. Y. DRYANSKY PHOTOGRAPHS BY ENRIC ROVIRA

AS I'M DRIVING out to visit Claudio Corallo and his cacao plantation on Príncipe—one of the two tiny equatorial islands off the coast of Gabon that together make up the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe, the smallest country in Africa—my jeep is forced to make a sudden stop. The driver points to something moving up ahead: a long, black cobra, seemingly unperturbed by our presence, is nonchalantly crossing the road. It's hard to believe that only a few miles away, within this wild and tropical landscape, an Italian is creating some of the best and most complex chocolate in the world.

Although many chocolatiers buy bulk chocolate from a handful of processing companies that acquire their beans on the commodity markets, Corallo is one of only a few who are raising rare beans themselves. He then shepherds them in his own, particular way through the entire complicated process of making an edible chocolate, one that has a floral and earthy quality unlike that of any other.

DESPITE THE GRAY in his trimmed mustache, Corallo looks remarkably young and unworn for a man in his mid-50s who has survived malaria and two other parasitic diseases during his 32-year tenure in Africa. “Blame it all on Tarzan,” he jokes. Growing up in a well-to-do family in Florence, the son of a machine manufacturer and a classics professor, Corallo saw many of the Johnny Weissmuller films about that legendary jungle man and fell under their spell. He found himself hankering, Corallo explains, “for the exotic life of doing something with

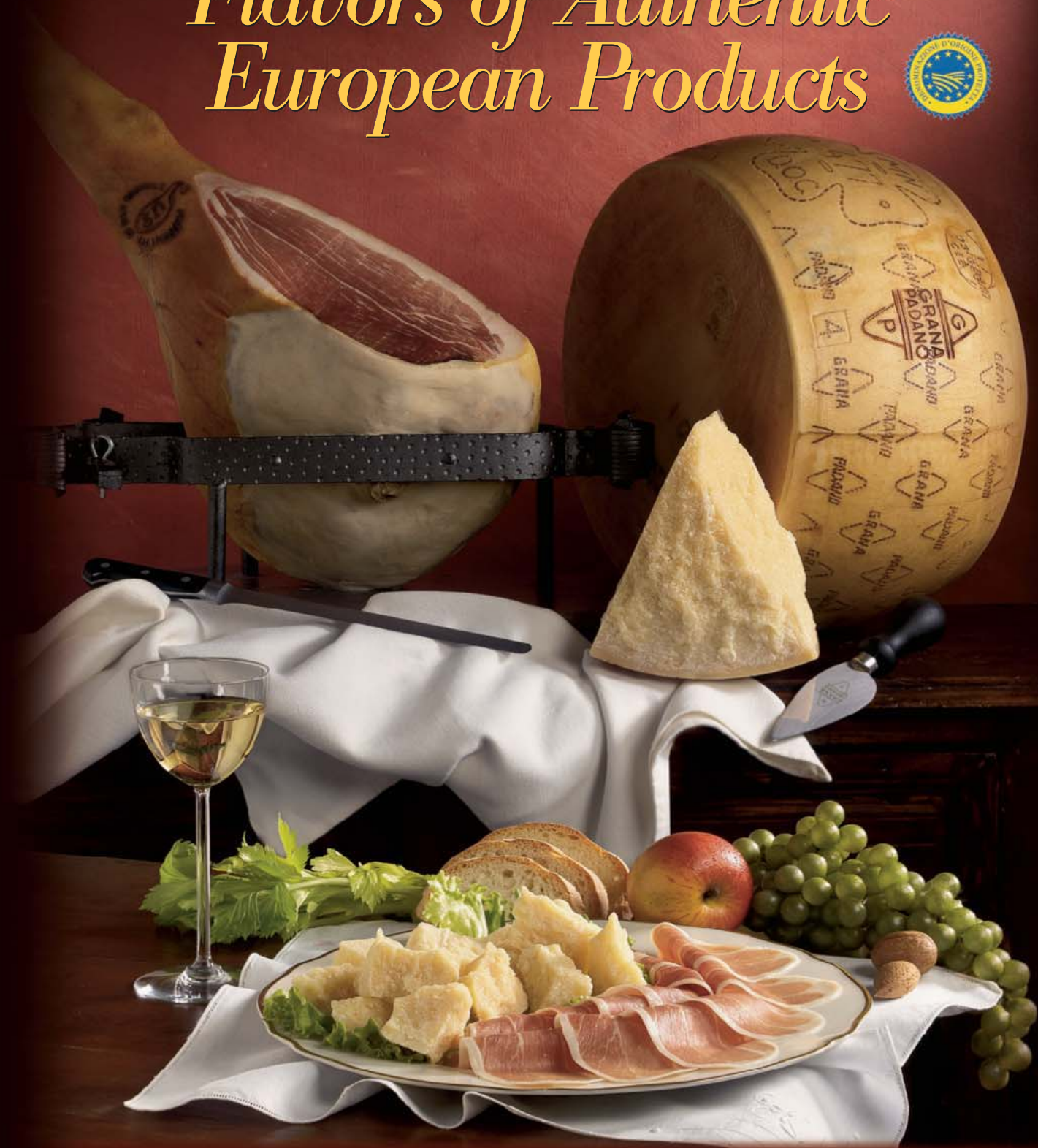


Above left, amelonado forastero cacao pods; right, Claudio Corallo at the drying machine at Terreiro Velho.

the land in Africa”. In 1974, at the age of 23, with a degree in tropical agronomy from the Istituto Agronomico per l’Oltremare, he took a job with the government of Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), doing an agricultural census. “It came to me that the job was senseless,” he now says. “What good was there in measuring these tiny farms, which didn’t do anything to improve their primitive nature?” After a year he quit, but he decided to stay in Africa to work for a buyer, processor, and exporter of coffee beans. “I took a dislike to the speculative world of the coffee business,” he says, “but I became fascinated by the enormous differences in flavor between the different varieties.” Around that

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time, Corallo met Bettina Baptista Martins, the daughter of the Portuguese ambassador to Zaire. She was ten years younger than Corallo, but in 1980, to the consternation of the ambassador, Corallo married her.

Soon afterward, Corallo bought two all-but-abandoned coffee bean plantations in the middle of the Zaire jungle. His first trip to survey them entailed a flight on an old DC-3 propeller plane followed by a three-day truck ride and a six-day trek, with porters, through 60 miles of jungle. Corallo soon took advantage of a short airstrip closer to the plantation, but the danger and expense of flying forced him to travel most of the time via the Lomela River, following the same route that his coffee beans took, by laboriously slow-moving barge. When he needed to purchase supplies in the capital city of Kinshasa, he would make the trip in a small outboard-motor boat.

The beginnings of the civil war that would drive the dictator President Mobutu Sese Seko from power in 1997 manifested themselves in 1993, when Corallo's plantations were looted. Corallo had moved his wife and two sons to Kinshasa by then, but that seemed unsafe as well, so the family decided to emigrate to the tiny island nation of São Tomé and Príncipe, a former Portuguese colony. There the government rented him a rundown, 260-acre cacao plantation on Príncipe called Terreiro Velho.

The Corallos stayed in a cabin on the beach at the edge of the plantation while Claudio began resuscitating Terreiro Velho. The property, running from the crystal waters of the Gulf of Guinea to dense jungle, had been abandoned when São Tomé and Príncipe gained its independence in 1975. Corallo was able to stop the decay of the ornate colonial house and also gave a new lease on life to the cacao trees—rare descendants of the original cultivars that the Portuguese brought over from the lower Amazon region to Africa starting in 1822—that were struggling for space amid the brush. He has also significantly raised the standard of living for the farmhands, who had been treated harshly under the previous owners.

Corallo's primary goal has been to get the cacao trees at Terreiro Velho to produce extraordinary chocolate. There are three major types of cacao trees: forastero, criollo, and a cross between the two known as trinitario. Corallo's are all of a variety called amelonado forastero. Criollo, which high-end bulk



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suppliers rely on, has a reputation for refinement. Forastero is known for yielding the greatest number of pods, but the beans are considered less refined in flavor. Still, says Corallo, “there is good forastero and bad forastero, just as there is good and bad criollo.” He hands me a raw cacao bean to taste; surprisingly, it has the flavor of an olive. “You see,” he says, “normally, raw cacao beans taste awful; they’re inedible. But not from my trees. They are descended from the trees that were planted before the emphasis changed from quality to quantity.”



Workers at a cacao plantation in the south of São Tomé.

EVERY PROFESSIONAL chocolate maker handles differently the process of transforming bean to confection. Always, the first step is fermentation. Most chocolate makers ferment their beans for two to seven days and no longer, to prevent malolactic fermentation from spoiling the taste. (The conversion of malic acid into lactic acid softens wine but gives a repugnant taste to cacao.) Corallo, however, is able to ferment his beans for nine to 17 days without the occurrence of any malolactic fermentation, thanks to careful temperature control and specially shaped bins, which he helped design. “The longer fermentation brings out much more of the good flavors while the bad are diminished,” he says. After fermentation, the beans are dried. For that Corallo uses machines he

invented; he scoffs at chocolate makers who boast of “sun-dried beans”. “It sounds nice,” he says, “but sun-drying is chancy. It changes with the weather, and when you get rain it definitely changes for the worse.” The dried beans are then roasted; Corallo modified a small roasting machine and conducted test after test until he was satisfied that he had perfected the process.

When it comes time to mill the roasted beans, Corallo grinds his into granules far coarser than the paste-like substance other chocolate makers usually end up with. “When you mill very fine, you get rid of flaws by exposing the chocolate to more air,” he says, “but you also lose aroma and flavor.” Corallo also eschews conching, the time-honored kneading technique intended to create smoother chocolate by altering its crystalline structure. For Corallo, conching is another way of chasing out flavor. The result of this nonconformist approach is a chocolate that is dense and dark, with a vegetal aliveness—qualities that have not gone unnoticed among buyers of fine chocolate.

AFTER SELLING HIS beans to a few European chocolate shops that roast their own beans, Corallo recently began setting up distribution of his own finished chocolate. With the help of a partner in Seattle, he will soon be selling his chocolates to U.S. consumers via the Internet.

While attending a chocolate fair in Paris three years ago, Corallo came upon a shop selling “Claudio Corallo” chocolate. “I never heard of these people,” he says, miffed at the theft of his name. But it was proof that his reputation for producing exceptional chocolate had finally made its way out of the jungle. 🐒



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SOURCE

Wok Love

Tane Chan is a passionate purveyor of the ancient cooking vessel

BY SARAH DIGREGORIO

IT'S EASY ENOUGH to find a wok these days, but a wok matchmaker? That is what Tane Chan is. The owner of the Wok Shop, a tiny store in San Francisco's Chinatown, Chan has spent more than 30 years pairing people of all nationalities and cooking abilities with the perfect wok.

Woks are popular, says Chan, because of their versatility: you can use them for stir-frying, braising, steaming, and deep-frying. But no single wok is suitable for everyone. Woks come in different sizes, shapes, and materials, and there are various handle options as well. To determine which combination to recommend, she observes customers as they walk around her store and asks them questions. "I size each person up," she says. "For instance, I ask if they want to cook real Chinese style, and if they say yes but they're worried about burning their hands, that's a giveaway. They need a wok with Western [i.e., wooden] handles." For home cooks with electric stoves, a good choice is a flat-bottomed enameled-iron wok with two heat-resistant plastic handles (left, foreground). Because it sits directly on the heat source, the bottom of the pan will get hotter than that of a round-bottomed wok, high heat being essential for proper stir-frying. If you have a gas stove and are looking for a more traditional vessel, Chan might suggest a round-bottomed wok in cast iron (left, rear), a superior heat conductor.

Chan opened the Wok Shop after Richard Nixon's historic visit to China in 1972. Suddenly, everyone was interested in Chinese food. But even in San Francisco, with its large Chinese population, there was no store that offered a comprehensive selection of woks, nor was there one that could cater to English speakers. Chan decided to fill that void. A self-described "wok-a-holic", she can still be found at her shop seven days a week and spends hours answering e-mails from online customers. "A wok is forever," she declares, "so it's important to find the right one." Chan's woks cost from \$9.95 to \$125, plus shipping. To order, call 888/780-7171 or visit www.wokshop.com. 

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CLASSIC

Cream of New York

Cheesecake is the Big Apple's other coveted slice

BY ARTHUR SCHWARTZ

THE STORY OF New York cheesecake, like that of so many beloved American foods, is a narrative of immigrant tradition, disputed pedigree, and local pride. The city's signature dessert owes its existence in large part to Philadelphia cream cheese, which, in turn, can trace its provenance to the small upstate New York town of Chester. There, cream cheese as we know it—imitating the mellow flavor and soft texture of French *neuf-châtel*—was created, in 1872. The cheese was soon picked up by a New York City dairy distributor and (in a nod to a place then esteemed for its fine food products) called Philadelphia Brand.

The end of the 19th century also brought a wave of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe to New York City. With them came old recipes for rich

cheesecakes made from fresh-curd varieties of cheese like cottage and farmers'. Making do with the ingredients at hand in their adopted country, those home cooks incorporated cream cheese into their cakes.

How this Americanized cheesecake was introduced into the public realm, and into New York City mythology, has long been the subject of debate. Arnold Reuben, of the legendary Manhattan delicatessen that bears his name, liked to claim that he was the first to serve it, in the 1910s.

By the 1920s, Reuben's was hardly the only New York restaurant offering cheesecake. Arnold Reuben's main competitor, deli man Leo Lindemann, lured away Reuben's Swiss-born pastry chef, Paul Heghi, to re-create the dessert at his establishment, Lindy's, where it became iconic. It was even immortalized in *Guys and Dolls*, the musical inspired by Damon Runyon's 1931 short story collection of the same name.

Among the notable New York cheesecakes available today are those from S&S Cheesecake, in the Bronx, and Junior's, in Brooklyn. The memory of the original version once served at Lindy's still lingers, though, and fortunately the recipe for it has survived. So, we can still feast on the standard for the dessert my American-born (but thoroughly Russian) mother calls a meal unto itself. 🍴

RECIPE

Lindy's Cheesecake

MAKES ONE 9" CAKE

This recipe is an adaptation of one in *Arthur Schwartz's New York City Food* by Arthur Schwartz (Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 2004).

FOR THE CRUST:

1 2" piece vanilla bean, halved lengthwise
1 cup flour
1/4 cup sugar
1 tsp. lemon zest
8 tbsp. butter, cut into 1/4" cubes
1/4 tsp. salt
1 egg yolk
1 tbsp. vegetable oil

FOR THE FILLING:

2 1/2 lbs. cream cheese, softened
1 1/4 cups sugar
3 tbsp. flour
1 1/2 tsp. orange zest
1 1/2 tsp. lemon zest
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
5 eggs plus 2 egg yolks
1/4 cup heavy cream

1. For the crust: Preheat oven to 400°. Scrape vanilla seeds into a medium bowl; discard pod. Add flour, sugar, and zest and mix with your fingers to break up seeds. Add butter, salt, and yolk and work mixture with your fingers to form a rough dough. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead to combine. Form dough into 2 rounds and wrap each in wax paper. Refrigerate for 1 hour.

2. Remove outer ring of a 9" springform pan. Grease bottom of pan with half the oil. Using floured hands, press 1 dough round onto bottom of pan to cover it. Bake until light golden brown, 10–12 minutes. Allow to cool slightly; refrigerate for 30 minutes. Grease inside of outer ring with remaining oil; attach to bottom of pan. Using floured hands, pull off pieces from remaining dough; press them around sides of pan to cover. Press inside edge of dough against bottom crust to seal. Set aside.

3. For the filling: Preheat oven to 500°. Beat cheese, sugar, flour, zests, and vanilla in a large bowl with an electric mixer until smooth. Add eggs and yolks, one at a time; beat after each addition. Stir in cream. Pour filling into pan; smooth top with a spatula. Bake on a baking sheet until deep golden brown, about 10 minutes. Reduce heat to 200° and bake for 1 hour more. Let cool (in the pan) on a rack. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Remove cake from pan. Let warm slightly at room temperature for 1 hour. Cut cake into slices and serve.



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A full-page photograph of Chef Jereme Leung. He is a man with short dark hair, wearing a white chef's jacket and white trousers. He is sitting in a black and white chair, leaning back with his right arm resting on the chair's back. He is looking towards the left. The background is a hallway with wood-paneled walls and a ceiling with recessed lights. The entire image is framed by ornate, golden-brown architectural details, possibly part of a traditional Chinese building, with intricate carvings and patterns. The lighting is warm and golden.

SHANGHAI SURPRISE

*Chef Jereme Leung
is redefining his adopted city's
cuisine one dish at a time*



SHANGHAI

RECIPE

Bingzhen Huangjiu Ji

(Chilled Drunken Chicken with Rice Wine Granita)

SERVES 8

This take on the Chinese classic dish called drunken chicken marinates overnight in rice wine and a liquor redolent of roses called meiguilu jiu. It's garnished with wolfberries, a red-orange, raisin-like Chinese medicinal herb. For a source for hard-to-find Chinese ingredients, see THE PANTRY, page 106.

1 tbsp. vegetable oil
10 scallions, cut into 3"-4" pieces
1 2" piece ginger, thinly sliced
3 tbsp. salt
1 tbsp. sugar
4 dried bay leaves
2 star anise
2 cinnamon sticks
5 tbsp. plus 1 cup shaoxing jiu (Chinese rice wine; see page 101)
4 boneless skin-on chicken thighs (about 1¼ lbs.)
2 tsp. meiguilu jiu liquor
8 dried pitted wolfberries
1 large anaheim chile, stemmed, seeded, and cut into 1" squares

1. Heat a large flat-bottomed wok over high heat until hot. Add oil, half the scallions, and half the ginger; stir-fry for 1 minute. Add 4 cups water; bring to a boil. Add salt, sugar, bay leaves, star anise, and cinnamon; return to a boil. Reduce heat to medium; simmer for 3 minutes. Strain scallion-ginger liquid through a fine sieve into a bowl (discard solids); let cool to room temperature.

2. Meanwhile, wipe wok clean; add 3 cups water; bring to a boil. Add remaining scallions and ginger, 5 tbsp. rice wine, and chicken; return to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, covered, until chicken is just cooked through, 6-8 minutes. Drain chicken mixture in colander, cover with ice cubes and let cool for about 10 minutes. Transfer chicken to a wide dish; set aside.

3. Stir remaining rice wine and liquor into reserved scallion-ginger liquid. Stir together ½ cup wine mixture with ¾ cup water in a bowl. Pour into an ice cube tray; freeze. Pour remaining wine mixture over chicken; cover and let chill for 24 hours.

4. Bring a small pot of water to a boil. Add wolfberries and chiles; cook for 1 minute. Drain. Cut chicken into 1½" x 2" pieces; divide along with chiles between 8 martini glasses. Pulse rice wine ice cubes in a food processor for 10-15 seconds until slushy, to make a granita. Spoon about 2 tbsp. of granita into each glass; garnish with wolfberries.

by Grace Young
photographs by Ben Fink

IN 1981, I ACCOMPANIED my parents to Shanghai. It was my mother's first trip in over 30 years to the city that she had lived in as a girl. During that time—mostly because of the Communist takeover of China—much of the city's notorious old-world glamour disappeared. Despite this, my mother assumed that she would still be able to indulge in her favorite childhood dishes, like crisp red-cooked spareribs and sweet-and-sour fish. Shanghai had long been a renowned culinary destination, and we expected to eat well.

The food we encountered, though, proved to be as dispiriting as the drab, dilapidated city itself. It was, in fact, no different from the

of pork. Even Mama, who initially insisted that we just hadn't gone to the right places, was eventually forced to concede that great Shanghai chefs were a thing of the past.

IN 2000, I RETURNED to Shanghai with my now elderly parents, and our earlier disappointment was replaced by a pleasant surprise: good food was back. After ten years of free-market reforms, Shanghai was once again a vibrant city, and this new dynamism was apparent in the cuisine. For my mother, the food was everything she had longed for. We ate delicate soup dumplings with juicy crab filling and flaky turnip cakes so fragile that they crumbled under the slightest



Above left, chilled drunken chicken; right, Leung's cooking notebooks. Facing page, tea-smoked eggs with caviar. Previous pages, from left, Leung at the Whampoa Club; tea service at the restaurant.

unappetizing fare we'd been served in Guangzhou, Beijing, Xian, and the other cities we visited on that trip—mainly tepid stir-fries, made with old napa cabbage and fatty shreds

pressure of our chopsticks.

GRACE YOUNG is a new *SAVEUR* consulting editor living in New York City. Her latest book is *The Breath of a Wok* (Simon & Schuster, 2004). This is her first article for the magazine.

Six years later, Shanghai is a financial powerhouse and a sprawling metropolis that roars with construction. With scores of boutiques, art galleries, and nightclubs, the city has re-established its reputation for trendsetting sophistication, which is also evident at the table. A growing appetite for foreign foods has led to a restaurant boom; Italian, French, Spanish, Japanese, (continued on page 57)

SHANGHAI



RECIPE

Xunlong Yuzi Yanxun Dan

(Tea-Smoked Eggs with Caviar)

SERVES 4

These smoky, creamy-in-the-center eggs are topped with spoonfuls of caviar—a luxurious combination of flavors and textures. When preparing this dish, Jereme Leung uses Chinese duck eggs that contain a red yolk; they're unavailable in the U.S. Regular duck eggs make a fine substitute. For a source for hard-to-find ingredients, see *THE PANTRY*, page 106.

4 duck eggs
 1 tsp. salt
 1/4 cup black tea leaves
 1 tbsp. long-grain rice
 2 tbsp. flour
 1 tbsp. sugar
 Pinch of five-spice powder
 9 shiso leaves, 1 julienned
 4 tsp. caviar, such as sevruga or osetra

1. Put the eggs into a small pot, cover with water, and bring to a boil over high heat. Add salt, reduce heat to low, and simmer, covered, for 1 minute. Remove the pot from the heat and let sit, covered, to gently cook the eggs for 2 minutes. Immediately transfer eggs to a large bowl of ice water and let chill for 10 minutes. Drain. Gently crack and peel the eggs. Pat the eggs dry.

2. Put the tea, rice, and 1/4 cup water into a small bowl and let soak for 3 minutes. Drain the tea mixture in a fine sieve, shaking out any excess water. Line a large flat-bottomed wok and its lid with heavy-duty aluminum foil, pressing the foil against the bottom. Spread the tea mixture in the bottom of the wok, sprinkle the flour, sugar, and five-spice powder over the top, and place a small metal heat-proof rack over the mixture. Place the eggs on rack spaced 2" apart.

3. Open your windows and turn on the exhaust fan. Heat the wok over high heat until the tea mixture begins to smoke, 2 1/2–3 minutes. Cover tightly with the lid and continue to smoke until eggs are tinged golden yellow, 5–6 minutes. Remove from the heat and transfer eggs to a clean work surface. (Cool and discard the tea mixture.) Slice the eggs in half lengthwise and place each half atop a whole shiso leaf on a platter. Garnish the yolk of each egg with a dollop of caviar and a little of the julienned shiso leaf. Serve promptly.

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Shanghai is undergoing a gustatory revolution, with restaurants, bistros, and shops of every culinary stripe opening at a dizzying pace, from the haute dining in the French Concession to dim sum in the Old Town. That's why, in creating this at-a-glance tour of the city, we decided to impose parameters. Namely, we decided not to stray from Chinese cuisine and to emphasize purveyors of traditional Shanghai foods and their modern-day incarnations. Shanghai's long-standing obsession with food is in evidence virtually everywhere: humble vendors offering xiaochi (snacks) crowd street corners and back alleys while servers gracefully dispense tea in teahouses. It's enough to overwhelm even the most adventurous of epicures. Our best advice for the culinary-minded visitor? Follow your instinct and roam. This city, where "Have you eaten yet?" is the greeting of choice between strangers, won't disappoint. —*The Editors*



Clockwise from top left: chopsticks at Shanghai Yuyuan Trading City Goods Company; making xiaolong bao at Nan-Xiang Steamed Bun Restaurant; a shopwindow in Xintiandi; Gu Yuan Tea House. Previous page, Shanghai-style stir-fried rice cakes at the Whampoa Club.

1221 1221 Yan'an Xilu (6213-6585). A longtime favorite of locals and foreigners alike, 1221 is renowned for its xiangsu ya (crispy fried duck stuffed with taro), youtiao (fried crullers), and eight-treasure tea (a mix of dried fruits and flowers and jasmine tea). For a first-time visitor to Shanghai, it offers an ideal introduction to the city's food scene.

BAO LUO 271 Fumin Lu (5403-7239). Announced by an easy-to-miss sign out front, this restaurant serving Shanghaiese fare stays open until six in the morning, so it's an ideal stop after a night of clubbing. The roast eel is a highlight.

BAR ROUGE 18 Zhongshan Dong Yi Lu (6339-1199; www.resto18.com). If any nightclub captures the essence of China's new urban elite—and evokes Shanghai's prerevolutionary hedonism—it's Bar Rouge. Communist austerity is a dim memory at this rooftop bar overlooking the glass towers of the Pudong financial district. Lounge on teak beds, enjoy mojitos, and watch bartenders serve champagne as the sun sets and the city lights flicker on. If exclusivity isn't your scene, give it a try anyhow—it's an essential Shanghai experience.

CRYSTAL JADE 123 Xingye Lu (6385-8752); Hong Kong New World Tower (6335-4188). As any Chinese-food connoisseur will tell you, Lanzhou-style noodles—hand-pulled wheat noodles whose origin is in that northern Chinese city—are the ultimate comfort food. The best place to sample them in Shanghai is at this branch of a popular dim sum minichain, where watching the noodles being made is an attraction in its own right. The handmade taro cakes, shrimp dumplings, and barbecue pork buns are also a draw.

GU YUAN TEA HOUSE 1315 Fuxing Lu (6445-4625). As wine is to the French, tea is a lifeblood in China,

the object of time-honored traditions and refined rituals. Nowhere in Shanghai is this heritage more apparent than at the Gu Yuan teahouse, where a visitor can lounge beside a sculpture garden in private tearooms adorned with antique Chinese scrolls while sipping an earthy infusion of pu-erh tea, aged for as long as 30 years.

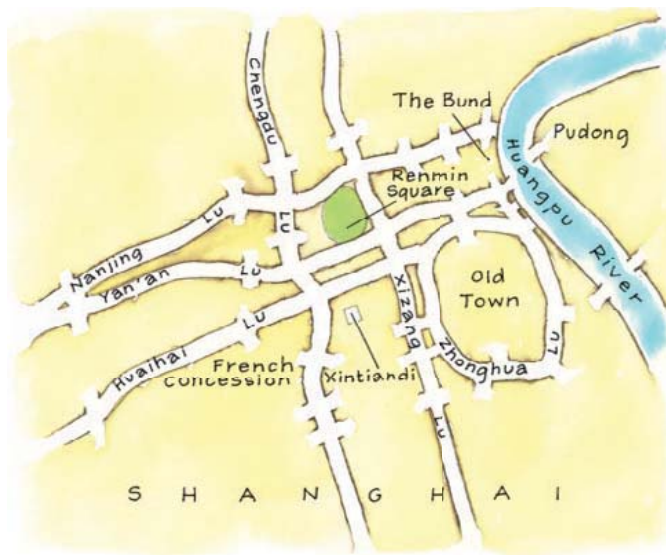
HUANGHE LU, WUJIANG LU, YUNNAN NANLU *Near Renmin Square.* "Don't look back" could be the mantra of Shanghai's urban planners, who have put their city at the vanguard of China's galloping modernization. Fostered by a skyrocketing population and a booming economy, skyscrapers—more than 2,000 of them at last count—have largely replaced the low-rise streetscape that characterized the city in the 1930s. And yet, vestiges of old Shanghai can be found: these three age-old back streets, just off Renmin Square, are filled with noisy hawkers by day and prowled by revelers at night—and, no surprise, they are veritable midways of fine eats.

LAN TING RESTAURANT 107 *Songshan Lu, between Taicang Lu and Xing'an Lu (5306-9650).* That Lan Ting, a thoroughly unprepossessing establishment, sits within easy walking distance from Xintiandi, Shanghai's lively pedestrian mall of posh boutiques and handsomely restored stone houses, might seem ironic to a first-time visitor. But the restaurant's loyal clientele, accustomed to Shanghai's contrasts, knows that Lan Ting isn't about ambience or even service. It's about the juicy braised chicken and the restaurant's other shining examples of Shanghaiese cooking.

MEILONGZHEN 1081 *Nanjing Xilu, Lane 22 (6253-5353).* New York City has Rao's, Los Angeles has Musso and Frank, and Shanghai has Meilongzhen. Like

the former two redoubts of old-time atmosphere, Meilongzhen, one of Shanghai's longest-established restaurants, is a venerable shrine where it's tough to get a table and, once you're seated, very hard to leave. Mahogany graces the dining room, and on the menu spicy Sichuan flavors meet traditional Shanghaiese classics. The eggplant dishes are exceptional, as are the deep-fried eel, lobster in pepper sauce, and Sichuan duck.

NANXIANG MANTOU DIAN *Yuyuan Bazaar, 85 Yuyuan Lu (6355-4206).* Mention xiaolong bao—thin-skinned dumplings filled with juicy



pork and piping-hot soup—to a group of Shanghai denizens, and you're likely to hear the kind of spirited argument most people expect from sports fanatics. Finding this signature Shanghai food is easy; finding the best can entail an odyssey. We like this celebrated little dumpling shop, next to Yuyuan Garden in the Old Town, where the dumplings are divine.

SHANGHAI CLASSICAL HOTEL 242 *Fuyou Lu (6311-1777).* In a city with such deep international roots—French pastries and Russian borscht have been on menus here for decades—the notion of "local" cuisine can be nebulous.

But when Shanghai residents want truly indigenous fare, they head to restaurants like the one in the Shanghai Classical Hotel that serve *ben bang* (literally, local) cuisine, which emphasizes super-fresh seafood.

SHANGHAI NO. 1 FOOD STORE

720 *Nanjing Donglu (6322-2777).* To shop where the locals shop is invigorating in any foreign city, and it's especially so in Shanghai. There's no better place to start than this stalwart supermarket. Birds' nests, shark fins, dried scallops, Chinese sausage, roasted chestnuts, candies, cakes, pastries, liquors—they're

WANG BAOHE 603 *Fuzhou Lu (6322-3673).* As any Marylander will tell you, there's something primal about eating crabs—the hammering and scraping and finger sucking—that elevates a mere meal to a feast. It's no different in Shanghai, where the star of the show is a variety called hairy crab. If you must limit yourself to a single crab meal in Shanghai, then try Wang Baohe, the 200-plus-year-old grandfather of Shanghai crab houses.

XIN JISHI 41 *Tianping Lu (6282-9260; www.xinjishi.com).* The original location of this restaurant chain, commonly known as Jesse, is crowded and relatively out of the way, in west Shanghai, but a lot of locals would travel twice as far for Jesse's *ti pang* (red-cooked pork shank), a city favorite.

XINTIANDI Bordered by Huangpi Nanlu, Taicang Lu, Zizhong Lu, and Madang Lu (www.xintiandi.com). This pedestrians-only zone is a perfect embodiment of Shanghai's present-day character: an exuberant, incongruous mix of old and new. Once designated part of the city's French settlement and a stone's throw from the site of the First Congress of the Chinese Communist Party of China, this assemblage of open spaces and narrow alleys is now an affluent shopping enclave, where upscale boutiques and stylish bistros coexist with restored *shikumen* (traditional Shanghaiese stone houses).

SHANGHAI YUYUAN TRADING

CITY GOODS COMPANY 31 *Yuyuan Laolu (6355-5340; www.zhonghua-xsp.com.cn).* You'll be hard-pressed to walk empty-handed out of this cookware supply store near Nan Xiang. Located amid a sea of souvenir shops, the store is a kitchenware enthusiast's dream, stocked from floor to ceiling with, among other things, traditional Chinese knives and scissors and myriad chopsticks—of bamboo, wood, silver, and more.

YONGFOO ELITE 200 *Yongfu Lu (5466-2727; www.yongfooeelite.com).* This elegant, aptly named club, located in a building that once served as the British consulate, proudly reproduces the opulence and international flavor of early-20th-century Shanghai. Decorated with antiques (some 600 years old), the restaurant serves fine updated Shanghaiese cuisine for lunch, afternoon tea, and dinner.

THE SAVEUR TOUR OF SHANGHAI

A FOOD-FOCUSED GUIDE TO CHINA'S MOST DELICIOUS CITY



"forget the dining room, it's the
food and local people that count."

Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations
The new season, coming Mondays in January

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SHANGHAI

(continued from page 50) Thai, and Indian cuisines have all taken root. Shanghainese fare is also thriving, and one of the most exciting developments is the emergence of a new generation of chefs, who are giving classic local dishes deliciously modern twists.

One of the most celebrated of these young innovators is Jereme Leung, a Hong Kong native, whose Whampoa Club has become a popular destination for affluent young Chinese and for gourmards from Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong. The restaurant is located at Three on the Bund, a neoclassical-style building overlooking the Huangpu River, with spectacular views of Pudong, Shanghai's business district. Built in 1916, the elegant



From left, a trio of cheongsam-clad hostesses at the Whampoa Club; an Art Déco-esque bas relief in the restaurant's elegant foyer.

structure was renovated in 2003 by the American architect Michael Graves and houses several other dining establishments, including Jean-Georges Vongerichten's namesake restaurant. With its Art Déco-esque interior, the Whampoa Club evokes the Shanghai of my mother's past.

Though Leung's cooking also evokes the past, his style is unapologetically contemporary. Take, for instance, his reductive version of drunken chicken, a Shanghai staple in which a whole steamed or poached bird is cut into small pieces, marinated in shaoxing jiu (a variety of Chinese rice wine) and chicken broth, and served virtually unadorned. In visiting a

number of Shanghai restaurants, Leung found that this dish almost never lived up to its reputation. "The chicken was either too cold or too dry, served in an unattractive clay pot, and diners had to struggle with the bones," he says. Instead, Leung chose to poach boneless thighs and refrigerate them in a rice-wine marinade (some of which he sets aside and freezes). Once ordered, the meat is cut into bite-size pieces, placed in a martini glass, and dramatically topped with a dollop of the granita-like frozen marinade.

Then there is his take on tea-smoked eggs, a classic preparation that had all but disappeared from local menus. In Leung's version, duck eggs are boiled just to the point at which the whites are firm but the yolks slightly runny. Their shells



removed, the eggs are quickly smoked with tea leaves, sugar, raw rice, and a hint of five-spice powder before being halved and topped with a dollop of caviar. Traditionally, they are sprinkled with salt, but Leung decided that caviar could impart saltiness and also add richness and visual appeal. Other time-honored dishes have been given subtler tweaks. Sichuan-style hot and sour soup, for example, is traditionally made with hot bean paste, but the Shanghainese generally prepare it with white pepper instead; Leung's rendition includes both. In ways large and small, he has given Shanghai cooking a contemporary sheen.

The mere fact that this 35-year-old Cantonese

cook is making Shanghainese food at all marks a departure from tradition. The Chinese have always been purists when it comes to regional cuisine—it's almost unthinkable that a chef from one province could be capable of preparing another region's food. Such a feat is possible in Shanghai, in part because it is arguably China's most cosmopolitan city, with a large population of foreigners and nonlocal Chinese. Like the city, Shanghainese cooking has always been more open to outside influences than other regional cuisines; in Mandarin, the food of Shanghai is described as *hai pai*, meaning that it draws not just on local ways but also on ingredients and techniques from other provinces and from the West.

ONE AFTERNOON AT the Whampoa Club, over a lunch that included a satiny carrot broth enriched with chicken, duck, and pigs' feet and garnished with green and white asparagus, and which ended with an elaborate tea service, Leung explained to me how he wound up in Shanghai. At the age of 13, he joined the staff of a Hong Kong restaurant and quickly worked his way up the ranks. Despite his diligence, though, he found it hard to get the senior chefs to share their knowledge. "I would purposely arrive at the kitchen by four in the morning, knowing the chefs arrived at five, so that they couldn't keep any secrets from me," Leung recalls.

During his teenage years, Leung learned what he calls the four cornerstones of Chinese cooking: making dim sum, barbecuing and roasting, mastering the wok, and cutting and carving vegetables. At the age of 19, after a stint in the army, he returned to the kitchen as a dim sum chef in Hong Kong's Oriental Pearl restaurant. He eventually went on to serve as an executive chef at five-star hotels in Hong Kong, Jakarta, and Kuala Lumpur. It was while working at the Four Seasons Hotel in Singapore in 2002 that he was approached by several investors looking to open a Chinese restaurant on Shanghai's historic waterfront. Although the investors gave him carte blanche to focus on the foods of any region in China, Leung felt it would be disrespectful to choose anything other than Shanghainese.

He faced constraints, however. Shanghai is located in an area known as "the land of fish and rice"—a reference to the region's famously fertile soil and close proximity to the Yangtze River. While Shanghainese cuisine emphasizes those assets, it tends to subject

SHANGHAI

them to rich, sweet flavors and the liberal use of soy sauce, sugar, and oil—in contrast to the lighter, Cantonese cuisine Leung grew up eating. “I thought the Shanghainese dishes were tasty, but the food was not very healthy,” says Leung.

Leung decided that he would create more-restrained versions of the classics. But, as

Leung knew, one first has to master those before earning the right to alter them. So, with the help of the Shanghai Culinary Institute, Leung found five local chefs to teach him traditional recipes. Twice a week for six months, the chefs took turns educating Leung in techniques and preparations.

In 2004, the Whampoa Club opened and

RECIPE

Hushi Suanla Geng

(Shanghai-Style Hot and Sour Soup)

SERVES 4

This rendition of hot and sour soup gets its sourness from chinkiang vinegar, a rice vinegar reminiscent of balsamic. For a source for hard-to-find Chinese ingredients, see **THE PANTRY**, page 106.

- 1 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup hot bean sauce
- 4 cups chicken stock
- 1 tbsp. shaoxing jiu (Chinese rice wine; see page 101)
- 1/4 tsp. sugar
- 1/8 tsp. freshly ground white pepper
- Pinch of salt
- 16 large peeled deveined shrimp, 12 butterflied (tails left on), 4 finely chopped
- 1/4 lb. silken tofu, julienned
- 1/2 cup drained canned bamboo shoots, julienned
- 1/2 oz. dried wood ear mushrooms (about 2 medium or 1 large), soaked in water for 1 hour, rinsed and julienned
- 6 small dried shiitake mushrooms, soaked in water for 30 minutes, julienned
- 2 large scallops, julienned
- 2 tbsp. cornstarch
- 2-3 tbsp. chinkiang vinegar
- 2 scallions, finely chopped

1. Heat a large flat-bottomed wok over high heat until hot. Add oil, then bean sauce, and cook until fragrant, about 5 seconds. Add stock, wine, sugar, pepper, and salt; bring to a boil. Add butterflied shrimp and simmer until just cooked through, about 1 minute. Using a slotted spoon, transfer shrimp to a plate and set aside. Stir in chopped shrimp, tofu, bamboo shoots, mushrooms, and scallops; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low; simmer, covered, for 3 minutes.

2. Stir cornstarch together with 3 tbsp. water in a bowl. Uncover wok, return soup to a boil, stir in cornstarch mixture, and cook, stirring constantly, until thickened, about 1 minute. Remove from heat, stir in vinegar, and ladle soup into 4 bowls. Garnish with butterflied shrimp and scallions.



Hushi suanla geng (Shanghai-style hot and sour soup) at the Whampoa Club.

quickly established itself as one of the city's finest restaurants. With his à la carte menu, Leung follows the Chinese custom of serving food family style. Leung changes the menus monthly, according to what ingredients are available. One morning, Leung and I visited a nearby market and found extraordinary young Chinese broccoli and fresh lily bulbs, which inspired him to prepare a stir-fry, adding colorful peppers to the mix. He seasoned it lightly with shaoxing jiu and ginger and served it in miniature bamboo steamers.

Leung insists that his food is not fusion—it is firmly founded on Chinese principles. Still, he observed as we shared the bright stir-fry, “Shanghai has always been the center of change and revolution.” Leung, it seems fair to say, wouldn't have it any other way. 

THE PANTRY, page 106: Sources for shaoxing jiu, meiguilu jiu, dried wolfberries, duck eggs, five-spice powder, shiso leaves, caviar, hot bean sauce, dried wood ear mushrooms, dried shiitake mushrooms, and chinkiang vinegar.

THE GUIDE

SHANGHAI

COUNTRY CODE: 86 AREA CODE: 21
EXCHANGE RATE: 8 yuan = \$1

Dinner with drinks, tax, and tip:
MODERATE \$25-\$60 EXPENSIVE Over \$60

For travel to Shanghai, we recommend Asiana Airlines, which offers comfortable and affordable flights to the city several times a week from New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle.

WHERE TO STAY

OLD HOUSE INN 16 Lane 351, Hua Shan Lu (6248-6118; www.oldhouse.cn). Rates: \$91 double. This small, centrally located hotel is a charming alternative to Shanghai's more conventional hotels. The 12 rooms are decorated with reproduction furniture that evokes the Shanghai of the 1930s, and the hotel houses an adorable café called Future Perfect (moderate), which serves excellent salads.

PORTMAN RITZ-CARLTON 1376 Nan-jing Xilu (6279-8888; www.ritzcarlton.com). Rates: \$299 double. Located on one of central Shanghai's swankiest streets, this is perhaps the city's premier hotel, with extraordinarily attentive service and plush rooms. The hotel offers a tour of the local wet markets; it culminates in a master class with chef Ho Wing of the Ritz's own Summer Pavilion restaurant (expensive).

ST. REGIS 889 Dongfang Lu (5050-4567; www.stregis.com). Rates: \$319 double. This is one of the most luxurious hotels in Pudong, Shanghai's gleaming financial district, on the east bank of the Huangpu River. It has superbly appointed rooms and 24-hour personal butler service.

WHERE TO EAT

WHAMPOA CLUB 3 Zhongshan Dong Yi Lu (6321-3737; www.threeonthebund.com). Expensive. Indulge in chef Jereme Leung's innovative take on Shanghainese cuisine with his lunch or dinner tasting menu. The general-seating area boasts a spectacular view of the Pudong district; guests can also luxuriate in private dining rooms. The wine list contains an intriguing selection of Chinese distilled spirits.

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By Rita Williams
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the CENTERPIECE

THE TURKEYS RAISED ON A COLORADO FARM DIDN'T JUST TASTE GOOD; THEY OFFERED A HARD-WON LESSON IN HUMILITY

FOR MOST Americans, the word *turkey* might bring to mind an image of the golden roasted centerpiece of a traditional Thanksgiving table surrounded by an attractive couple, their well-behaved children, assorted grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, and, from a discreet distance, the adoring but vigilant family dog. My associations with the word *turkey* are quite different.

It was the '50s, and I was living out in the country, a ways from Steamboat Springs, Colorado, with my aunt, Daisy. Her brother, Ernest, was heading to the pen—and not the turkey pen, either. He was heading to the Colorado State Penitentiary.

IN A REGION FAMOUS for its vast cattle ranches, we had a very small farm. In a valley valued for its Hereford cattle, we produced poultry. And in a state where both the land and its people were blizzard white, my aunt and I were a family of color. Though I found his middle-of-the-night visits via bus unnerving, Ernest, with his penchant for velvet-fringed sombreros, was the most colorful of all.

I was fascinated by this tall man whose skin was the color of the Bronze turkeys he insisted we raise. "Them broad-breast whites ain't got a bit of taste," he would say. Ernest once worked as a chef in Denver, and he introduced me to the word *cuisine*. When he wanted to make a point, you could



Uncle Ernest, above, in the 1930s. Facing page, brined and roasted turkey.

TURKEY

METHOD

Brined and Roasted Turkey

Brining turkeys has become de rigueur in many American households. How does it work? Soaking the bird in a salty brine causes it to absorb some of the seasoned liquid, which breaks down the proteins and seals in flavor and moisture. Toast 2 tbsp. dried sage in a skillet over medium-high heat for 2 minutes. Put sage into a large pot with 2 cups kosher salt, 1 cup sugar, and 2 quarts water. Bring to a boil, remove from heat, and stir in 6 quarts water; let cool completely. Put brine and a 10-12-lb. natural turkey (giblets and neck removed) into a brining bag (see page 106); seal and refrigerate for 8 hours or overnight. Preheat oven to 325°. Remove turkey from brine; pat dry. Lift up skin at neck of bird; cut and pull out wishbone (make a wish and discard, if you like). Place turkey on a roasting rack nestled in a roasting pan, breast side up, and tuck wings under the body. Brush turkey all over with 8 tbsp. melted butter; sprinkle with pepper to taste. Tie legs together with butcher's twine. Roast turkey, basting every 30 minutes, until deep golden brown and a thermometer inserted in the thickest part of the thigh (not touching bone) registers 165° degrees, 2½-3 hours. (Some people cook their turkey to 175° or above. We like to cook ours to a lower temperature to preserve the succulence of the breast, as it continues to cook once the bird is removed from the oven.) Let turkey rest for 20 minutes before carving (see page 102 for instructions). Serves 8-10.

RECIPE

Collard Greens with Smoked Turkey Wings

SERVES 8-10

The lexicon of African-American foodways of the South was created, says food historian Tracy N. Poe, through the combining of the foodstuffs and methods of African and Anglo-American cuisines. Collard greens boiled with cured meat products, whether turkey wings and necks or pork feet and hocks, is a direct offspring of that merging. This recipe is an adaptation of one in *Sylvia's Family Soul Food Cookbook* by Sylvia Woods (William Morrow, 1999).

2 smoked turkey wings (about 2½ lbs.)
 3 lbs. collard greens (about 3 bunches), stemmed and chopped into 1" pieces
 ¼ cup vegetable oil
 2 tbsp. sugar
 ½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper
 White distilled vinegar
 Tabasco sauce
 Corn bread

1. Put turkey wings and 6 cups water into a large tall pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, covered, for 1 hour. Add collard greens, oil, sugar, pepper flakes, and salt and pepper to taste and stir well. Return to a boil over high heat, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer, covered, until greens are tender, about 2½ hours.

2. Remove turkey wings from pot, pull meat and skin from bones, and chop into small pieces (discard bones). Return meat and skin to the pot of collard greens and season with salt, pepper, vinegar, and Tabasco to taste. Scoop collard greens and their liquid into bowls and serve with corn bread on the side to soak up the "pot likker", if you like.

see his eyes squinting through the blue smoke from the Pall Mall at the corner of his mouth as he rasped, "You dig?" Maybe it was the way of the West, or maybe it was the tradition of the South, where my aunt and uncle were from, but I can't recall Ernest's ever telling me a single personal thing about himself. Daisy and her taciturn brother, born in the early 1900s, spoke to each other in a code I never did decipher. In fact, I knew more about him from the casual rumors that made their way to me from school friends.

According to one, he had been hired on to muck out sheds at a poultry farm when an 18-wheeler arrived to transport a rafter of turkeys to the Denver stockyard. Ernest introduced himself as the farm's owner and rode with the driver to the Mile High City, where he sold the birds and pocketed the dough for himself. He then hightailed it to the dog track, only to lose every penny. Whether or not this tale is true, I do know that Ernest did do time for rustling livestock.

One summer when my uncle happened to be staying with us, a woman from Steamboat Springs came out to our place. Noticing Ernest's enormous turkeys, she asked him, "Why don't you present something at the

RITA WILLIAMS is the author of *If the Creek Don't Rise: My Life Out West with the Last Black Widow of the Civil War* (Harcourt, 2006). This is her first article for SAVEUR.



TURKEY

A Guide to Buying Turkey

CONVENTIONAL This perennial favorite—typically a Broad-Breasted White variety—boasts an ultraplump breast that has usually (but not always) been injected with butter, water, and salt; it will be labeled “self-basted” if it contains these ingredients. Though the flesh tastes appealing when spruced up with gravy and cranberry sauce, it can be bland on its own. The price is the real selling point: conventional turkeys go for about \$1 to \$2 per pound.



NATURAL Our favorite turkeys (often described as “minimally processed”) are those that haven’t been treated with artificial colors or flavor-enhancing ingredients. (Higher-priced “organic” turkeys are bred according to strict rules established by the USDA.) Like their conventional counterparts, natural turkeys are usually a Broad-Breasted White variety. Though you’ll pay more (they run around \$2.50 per pound), most have a clean, pure turkey flavor and moist flesh.



HERITAGE This category of turkeys comprises a host of old-time varieties, like Narragansett and Bourbon Red, which were staples of the pre-World War II American turkey industry. These breeds mature slowly; thus, their flesh can be pleasantly flavorful and moist—or unpleasantly gamy and chewy. It’s worth doing your research before buying: at an average price of \$6 to \$10 per pound, they’re by far the most costly turkeys available. —Todd Coleman



Routt County Fair?” That moment changed my uncle’s life. He took her advice and went on to win countless prizes. He tacked his ribbons onto a piece of plywood. And though he remained a gambler till the day he died, I don’t think he ever stole anything again.

Ernest’s devotion to raising perfect poults bordered on the obsessive, but I have never tasted juicier turkeys than the ones he brought up and

prepared on our little farm high in the Colorado Rockies. After I left the farm, what a delight it was for me to come home for the holidays in November and see the once downy poults, goslings, and chicks we had picked up at the train station in April now in full feather.

Ernest and Aunt Daisy carefully provided new straw bedding and grain for the birds each day. After being released from the pen in the

RECIPE

Turkey Tetrazzini

SERVES 8

This isn’t tetrazzini as you know it. The original, ascribed to Auguste Escoffier (“the king of chefs”), was a rich mixture of sherry-spiked cream, turkey, and cheese, named in honor of Luisa Tetrazzini, a celebrated early-20th-century opera singer. This home-style version is from our kitchen director, Liz Pearson, whose family makes it with leftover Thanksgiving turkey.

- 2 tbsp. butter
- 7 cups chicken broth
- 1 green bell pepper, cored, seeded, and finely chopped
- 1 large yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 lb. dried spaghetti
- 1 lb. skinless boneless roasted turkey, torn into large chunks (about 3 cups)
- 2 cups frozen peas, thawed
- 1 cup ketchup
- 1 7-oz. can mushrooms, drained
- 1/4 cup finely chopped drained pimientos
- 3 cups (about 1/2 lb.) grated cheddar cheese

Preheat oven to 350°. Butter an 11” x 13” casserole dish with 1 tbsp. butter. Combine broth, peppers, onions, garlic, and salt and pepper to taste in a large pot and bring to a boil. Add spaghetti in broken pieces, reduce heat to medium, and boil gently, stirring often, until spaghetti is al dente, 12–14 minutes. Remove from heat, add remaining butter, turkey, peas, ketchup, mushrooms, pimientos, and salt and pepper to taste and fold together. Transfer spaghetti mixture to buttered dish and cover with grated cheese. Bake until golden and bubbly, about 30 minutes. Set casserole aside to let cool slightly, then serve.



TURKEY

morning, they foraged much as they might have in the wild, albeit with clipped wings. After breakfast, they turned their attention to grooming. With their beaks, the turkeys preened and lofted each feather meticulously. Despite the fact that Ernest and Daisy would lead the animals to the butcher block come fall, my aunt and uncle lavished affection on these creatures as they raised them. “All right, you little choo-choos!” Daisy would call when she took them fresh feed in the afternoon. They responded by loping up to her like puppies eager for their treats.

I grieved through the whole slaughter process, yet my uncle and aunt thought nothing of it. “Happy birds taste best,” Ernest once declared, as he tilted his sombrero back.

THANKSGIVING PREP always started with a shopping list. Because we grew nearly everything we needed on the farm, we went to town only once a month, for lard, flour, coffee, and beans. But for the holidays, Ernest insisted that we replace our old spices. He even went so far as to search the cupboards, to make sure Daisy hadn’t tried to stash the old ones away. “Nothing but the finest, now,” he would say, as he unpacked the bright red cans of pepper, thyme, rosemary, and, most important, brand-new sage.

RECIPE

Panes con Pavo

(Salvadoran Turkey Sandwich)

SERVES 6

Turkeys were “thoroughly domesticated by the Aztecs and other Mexican and Central American races long before the arrival of Europeans”, according to A. Hyatt Verrill in *Foods America Gave the World* (L. C. Page, 1937). Proof positive: this gently spiced turkey sandwich, ubiquitous in El Salvador.

1½ cups light beer
2 tbsp. olive oil
2 tsp. black peppercorns
2 tsp. sesame seeds
2 tsp. pepitas (dried pumpkin seeds; optional)
1 tsp. dried oregano
½ tsp. annatto seeds (optional; see page 106)
5 cloves garlic
2 dried bay leaves
2 large turkey drumsticks (about 4 lbs.)
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
4 medium tomatoes, cored and chopped
2 small yellow onions, 1 chopped, 1 thinly sliced
1 green bell pepper, cored, seeded, and chopped
6 6" crusty italian bread loaves, ends trimmed, split in half lengthwise
1 bunch watercress

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Purée beer, oil, peppercorns, sesame seeds, pepitas, oregano, annatto, garlic, bay leaves, and 1 cup water in a blender. Combine purée and turkey in a dutch oven; season with salt and pepper to taste. Bring to a boil on the stove, cover, and bake until turkey is very tender, about 2 hours.

2. Purée tomatoes, chopped onions, peppers, and 1 cup water in blender. Transfer turkey to a plate (leave sauce in pot); let cool. Add purée to pot; boil over medium-high heat, stirring often, until thickened, about 45 minutes. Discard skin and bones from turkey; tear meat into thick pieces. Stir turkey into sauce, reduce heat to medium-low, and cook for 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Divide stew between loaves; garnish with sliced onions and watercress.



While Daisy rinsed her stone crock, Ernest brought out the special pie tin that he used expressly for toasting sage. “You take just a pinch and drop it in the hot pan and shake it back and forth until it starts smokin’,” he explained. “Then put it in soaking water to season the meat. Just a dab, now—don’t overdo it.” After lightly piercing the interior cavity of the turkey, being careful not to push through to the skin, he would immerse the entire bird in a heavy crock of salted water, and it would soak all night in the back of the refrigerator, where it was the coldest.

The next morning, I would stay in bed, tucked under my grandmother’s heavy quilt. My aunt and uncle’s banging of the kitchen irons would announce the arrival of the holiday. From my bed in the back room, I could tell exactly what was cooking by the parade of smells that wafted by. The first note was the smoke of the pine kindling as it flared; then came the ruddiness of percolating coffee and roasting chestnuts. It was always the freshly cut onions that would bring me fully awake, though.

The day would pass in leisurely fashion. Once the savory aroma of sage filled the kitchen, Ernest would diligently baste the turkey every half hour. Daisy, an avid competitor, would insist that we play a game of Chinese checkers before our guests arrived.

“How did you learn to cook?” I ventured shyly to Ernest, as he lifted the golden turkey out of the roaster.

“It ain’t the cookin’ that’s the point,” he said. “It’s the whole deal. Raisin’ him right from the start. You dig?” I did. 🍴

THE PANTRY, page 106: Sources for a brining bag and annatto seeds.

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Brunch *on the* Bayou

by Victoria
Abbott Riccardi

photographs by
Chris Granger

At one of Louisiana's last remaining sugarcane farms, a family cook prepares a hearty feast to celebrate the harvest

IT IS A COOL, BRIGHT FALL MORNING in St. Martinville, Louisiana, and Dottie Broussard, our beloved family cook (whom I secretly call the Sugar Queen), bustles about the kitchen at the St. John sugar farm, halving grapefruit, simmering syrup, and punching down sweet dough, all in preparation for

one of her famous Creole brunches.

Every weekend at this time of year, this cherished home overflows with my extended family, a group of more than 200 cousins from my father's side. The house sleeps only 16—it looks bigger on the outside—so family members must take turns and reserve their stays months in advance. This weekend is for the House Committee, which gathers several times a year to plan renovations of the 1828 Greek Revival-style mansion. Among the guests are Anne King Levert and her husband, John B. Levert Jr., both in their 70s; my father's first cousin Jane Cunningham Legier and her husband, Dave; Mary Virginia Gore

Friedrichs Burke (nicknamed Ginger); and several other relatives who live nearby. In all, there will be 15 of us at Dottie's brunch.

Although I was born in Boston, I've long felt a kinship with this part of Louisiana, especially during the fall, when purple martins migrating south from Canada swoop through the fields of apple green sugarcane and the sour, sappy smell of bagasse (crushed, fermenting cane pulp) permeates the air, indicating that the grinding season is in full swing. This

Dottie Broussard welcomes Eric and Charlie into the kitchen, right. Facing page, eggs hussarde.



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race against time begins with the first cold snap in October, when the sucrose rises in the sugarcane stalks and mills, like the one at St. John, hiss, screech, and clang 24 hours a day to transform the cane into

sugar before a lethal freeze hits in early January. The raw, pale brown sugar produced at the factory has been the lifeblood of my extended family for more than 118 years. And in a matter of hours we will celebrate its

harvest, as generations before us have done, with a glorious feast.

ST. MARTINVILLE lies 18 miles south of Lafayette along the Bayou Teche, a narrow, swampy waterway filled with mud turtles and alligators and lined with cypress, sycamore, and magnolia trees. The fertile, black earth along this 100-mile navigable stretch of water provided American Indians with an abundance of resources: timber for heat,

rich land to grow rice and corn.

After a wealthy Louisianan named Etienne de Boré successfully granulated sugar, in 1795, cane fields and sugarhouses began springing up along the various waterways, including the Bayou Teche.

As the sugar industry prospered, so did the planter families around St. Martinville. Many owned lavish mansions next to their acres of sugarcane, along with mills for processing the sugar. One such

RECIPE

Eggs Hussarde

(Poached Eggs with Tasso and Hollandaise Sauce)

SERVES 4

According to *American Cooking: Creole and Acadian* (Time-Life Books, 1971), eggs hussarde may have been named after 15th-century Hungarian mercenary soldiers called hussars, who often wore tomato red uniforms. This dish is traditionally made with two sauces, hollandaise and marchand de vin. The latter is typically based on veal stock, but Broussard uses a red-wine reduction that she calls divinity sauce instead.

11 tbsp. butter, melted
2 shallots, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1/2 cup dry red wine
2 tsp. fresh lemon juice
2 egg yolks
Pinch of cayenne
White distilled vinegar
8 eggs
4 english muffins, split and lightly toasted
24 1/4"-thick slices tasso (Cajun-style smoked pork, about 1 lb.; see page 106)
2 medium tomatoes, cored and cut into 8 thick slices

1. Heat 1 tbsp. butter in a small saucepan over medium heat. Add shallots, garlic, and salt and pepper; cook for 1 minute. Add wine, bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer until reduced by half, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat; strain through a sieve. Set divinity sauce aside.

2. Pour water into a medium saucepan to a depth of 2". Bring to a gentle simmer over medium-low heat. Whisk lemon juice, yolks, and 2 tbsp. water together in a heatproof bowl until frothy. Nestle bowl over simmering water and cook, whisking constantly, until pale yellow and thickened, 2-3 minutes. Remove bowl from heat and slowly drizzle in remaining butter in a thin stream, whisking constantly, to form a thick hollandaise sauce. Whisk in cayenne and salt. Cover to keep sauce warm.

3. Fill a large tall pot with at least 6" of poaching liquid (for every 4 cups of water, add 1/2 cup vinegar and 1/2 tsp. salt). Bring to a boil; reduce heat to medium-high to maintain a very gentle boil. Quickly crack each egg into the pot while holding your hands about 3" above the water. Poach eggs, without stirring, until yolks are set but still runny in the middle, 4 1/2-5 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer eggs to a paper towel-lined plate; trim off trailing egg whites, if you like. (For more information on poaching eggs, see page 102.) Set oven rack 4" from the broiler; preheat. Put muffin halves on a baking sheet, cut side up. Arrange 3 slices of tasso on each, drizzle tasso with divinity sauce, and top each with a tomato slice. Broil until tomatoes are bubbly, 3-4 minutes. Divide muffin halves between plates, top each with a poached egg, and spoon hollandaise over the top.

In a matter of hours, we will celebrate the harvest, as generations before us have done, with a glorious feast



Above left, moonshine made with St. John sugar; right, Dottie pouring unprocessed sugar out of a mason jar. Facing page, a farmer drives cane to the mill under a canopy of oak trees.

shelter, and trade and wildlife for food and pelts. The Acadians began arriving in 1765, after the British forces expelled them from their homeland in what is today known as the Canadian Maritime Provinces. Immigrants from Málaga, Spain, settled in the region, along with French aristocrats escaping the French Revolution and Creole families from Mobile and New Orleans. Those settlers used the sediment-

sugar baron was Alexandre Etienne DeClouet, a Civil War hero and Whig candidate for governor in 1849, who was known for his annual spending sprees in Paris. After years of borrowing heavily from his broker, John Baptiste Le-

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RECIPE

Mirliton Casserole

SERVES 6-8

Mirlitons, also called vegetable pears in Louisiana, are more commonly known as chayote. A type of pale green squash, they have a clean, crisp texture and taste like a cross between a zucchini and a cucumber.

7 mirlitons
13 tbsp. butter, melted
2 ribs celery, chopped
1 medium yellow onion, chopped
1/2 green bell pepper, cored, seeded, and chopped
1 lb. peeled deveined rock shrimp
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1 1/2 cups fresh white bread crumbs

1. Pour water into a medium pot to a depth of 2" and bring to a boil. Peel, pit, and cut mirlitons into 1" chunks. (Some people are allergic to the flesh, so you may want to wear gloves.) Add mirlitons, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer, covered, until mirlitons are very tender, about 1 1/2 hours. Drain well and mash roughly with a potato masher. Place mashed mirlitons in a colander in the sink to let all excess water drain.

2. Preheat oven to 375°. Butter an 8" x 8" baking dish with 1 tbsp. butter and set aside. Heat 6 tbsp. butter in a medium pot over medium heat. Add the celery, onions, and peppers and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and golden brown, about 20 minutes. Add the rock shrimp and cook, stirring, until just pink, about 30 seconds. Remove the pot from heat. Stir in mirlitons and season with salt and pepper. Transfer mirliton mixture to buttered dish. Toss remaining butter with the bread crumbs in a bowl. Sprinkle the casserole with the bread crumbs. Bake until golden brown and bubbly, 35-40 minutes. Set the casserole aside to let cool slightly, then serve.

vert, DeClouet was forced to pay off his \$80,000 loan in the form of property. In 1888, Levert—a businessman, sugar planter, and philanthropist, as well as the great-grandfather of my cousin Jane—became the happy recipient of St. John.

Over the next few decades, Levert's sugar business thrived while his family grew. He and his wife, Marie Stephanie Dupuy, had 12 children, eight of whom survived their parents and received equal shares of the family holdings when Levert died, in

1930. Although various family members have managed St. John over the years and a hundred or so still hold shares, Levert's great-grandson 63-year-old Lawrence Constant Levert III, fondly called Boo, now oversees the agricultural part of the operation with the help of his 40-year-old son, Charlie.

In the mid-19th century, the state of Louisiana boasted more than 1,500 sugar mills. Today, largely owing to increased global competition, inflation, more-violent hurricane seasons, and

competition from producers of corn sweeteners, St. John is one of only 12 sugar mills left. "The challenge is to see the factory survive," Boo recently said to me. "It was questionable whether

"The challenge is to see the factory survive," says Boo. "It's the heart and soul of the area, and I think the community appreciates it"



it would survive when I moved here [to manage the property], and it's still questionable. But this factory is the heart and soul of the area, and I think the community appreciates it."

WHILE TRUCKS heaped with cut cane rumble past the kitchen door on their way to the mill, Dottie presses cinnamon sugar-coated dough balls into a tube pan for her famous monkey bread—a sticky, raisin-dotted ring glistening with dark caramel. "It's an old family recipe," she says, stepping over to the stove to lower the heat under a pot of simmering mirlitons (a squashlike fruit also known as chayote). "But I don't write anything down. I cook out of my head; that's how they taught us way back. I learned it all from my mom. She lived to be 102."

Born Doris Batiste, Dottie has been cooking at St. John

Mirliton casserole, left. Above, Dave Legier. Facing page, from left, Charlie Levert holding freshly cut cane; broiled grapefruit halves.

for over 30 years. In addition to her brunches, she prepares Friday- and Saturday-night suppers, which frequently consist of gumbo and fried chicken. She plans all the menus, shops for



all the food, and presides over the cozy kitchen, to which she is able to walk from her home down the road. When Dottie “retired” at 65, the family gave her a sapphire and diamond heart-pendant necklace. That was seven years ago. Dottie’s sister Gebena (Jenny) also cooked at St. John, for 52 years, and not only on weekends (*continued on page 75*)

METHOD

Broiled Grapefruit

This classic brunch item tastes the best when prepared with sweet red grapefruit, preferably ruby red. Set an oven rack 4" from broiler; preheat. Halve 2 stemmed pitted maraschino cherries. Halve 2 red grapefruits; trim the ends so that they sit flat when upright; transfer to a baking sheet, cut side up. Run a knife around edges and between sections of grapefruit to loosen. Sprinkle each with 1-2 tbsp. light muscavado sugar (see page 106); place 1 cherry half, rounded side up, in the middle of each grapefruit. Broil until bubbling with caramelized sugar, 5-6 minutes. Serves 4.



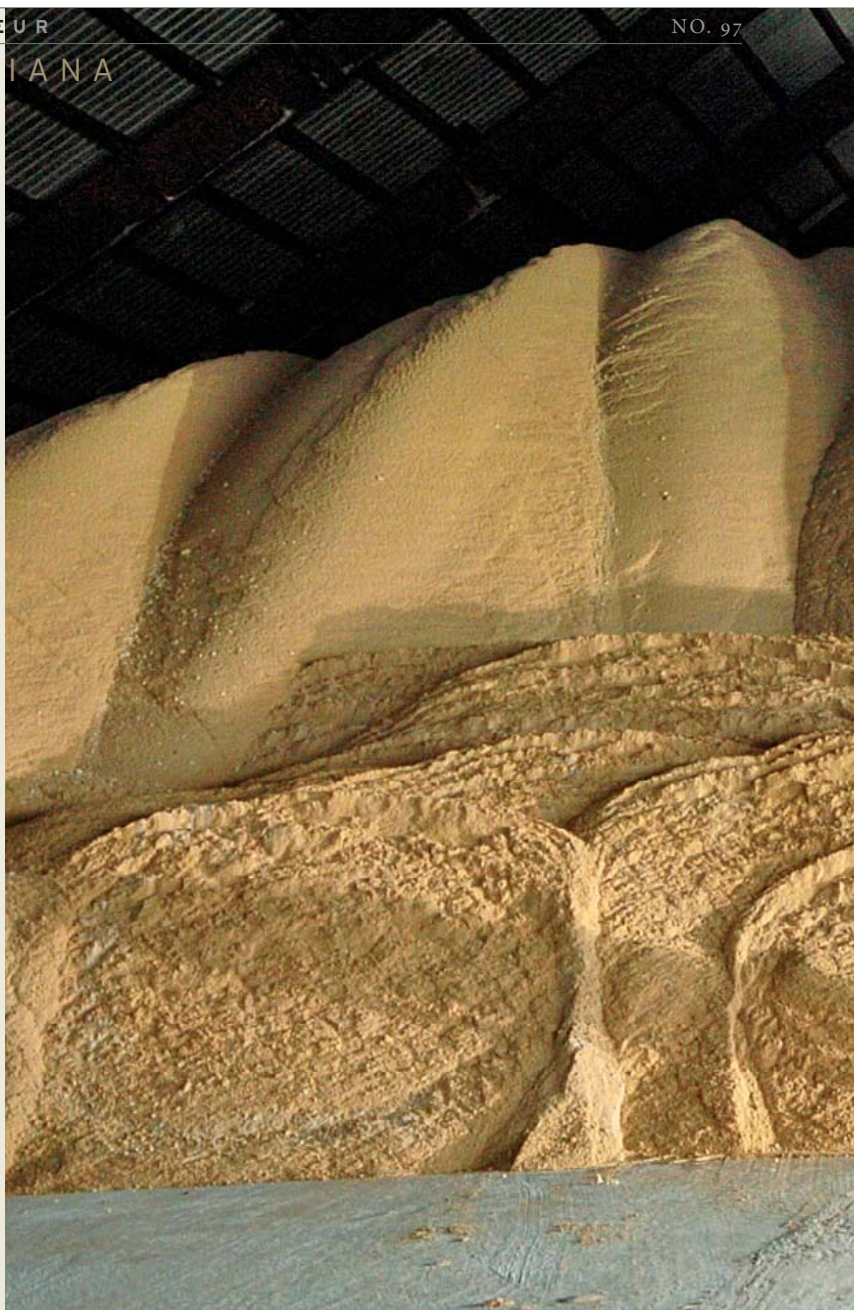
the art of. Making Sugar

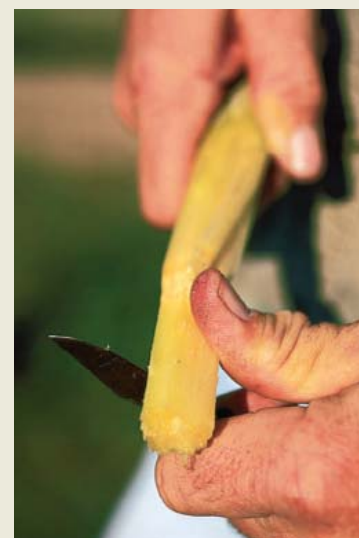
Making sugar can be a bitter business. I learned this when Boo Levert, a shareholder of the St. John sugar mill in St. Martinville, Louisiana, took me on a tour of the operation. "The sugar industry is facing tremendous hardships," said Boo, raising his voice above the din of the cane-filled trucks pulling in to the gravel parking lot outside the factory. "Costs have skyrocketed—labor, fuel, fertilizers, and insurance—and yet we're still getting the same price from the market."

A metallic scraping sound ripped through the air as Boo and I headed into the mill—a tangle of machinery, pipes, and stacks spewing clouds of steam. Blasts of water rinsed the chopped cane—called billets—before three sets of rotary knives slashed apart the pieces. The shredded bits then passed under a series of huge metal rollers, which pressed out the juice. The spent cane zipped up

conveyor belts to fuel the burners that produce the steam that powers the mill. As we made our way toward the clarification tanks, where the muddy juice is strained, heated, and filtered, beige flecks of bagasse (crushed, fermenting cane pulp) swirled through the air like snow.

In a good year, St. John processes a million tons of sugarcane, which





Clockwise from left: Boo and the author in front of a mountain of raw sugar; a sugar-covered mill worker; raw cane; harvested stalks at dawn; cane burning; newly formed crystals held up to the light.

yields approximately 100,000 tons of sugar. Around the turn of the century, the entire state of Louisiana produced a mere 302,000 tons of sugar, mainly for lack of sophisticated technology. Until the 1940s, St. John made sugar the old-fashioned way, without combines, by hiring hundreds of local farmhands during each grinding season to hand-cut the stalks with machetelike knives. In the previous century, horses and mules—replaced by today's mechanized shredders and rollers—turned the millstones that crushed the cane and extracted

the juice. To boil down the juice, Boo's grandfather used massive kettles heated with burning logs, instead of the sleek, silver boilers and evaporators that towered over me as we entered a steamy section of the mill that smelled like gingerbread.

Sugar crystals develop, I learned, when syrup boils at a low temperature and then evaporates in a partial vacuum. Tanklike evaporators reduce the cane juice to heavy syrup. Then highly trained men called sugar boilers transfer it to vacuum pans to let the crystals grow. An extremely small window of timed

exists in which perfect grade A crystals—about a millimeter square—can be produced. If the sugar boiler repressurizes the vacuum pans too soon, immature crystals are the result; if he pulls them too late, irregular-size grains form and the entire batch must be melted down and crystallized again.

Boo opened a boiler spigot and dripped a gob of honey brown sludge, called massecuite, onto a small rectangle of glass. He held it up to the light, revealing a jumble of perfectly formed crystals suspended in molasses. The massecuite traveled to a centrifuge, which spun off

blackstrap molasses (later to be sold as cattle feed), leaving behind a thick layer of sugar clinging to the machine's walls. The sugar was soft and light tan and had a tantalizing sparkle. Still warm, it crunched slightly and tasted of minerals and pralines. Most of it stays piled in a warehouse before being sold to refiners, such as Domino, which process it into white sugar. A small portion of it heads to the kitchen at St. John to sweeten the family's coffee, brunch treats, and desserts. —V.A.R.



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(continued from page 71) but also during the week, for the workers who boarded at the farm. Their father was an overseer in the cane fields, their mother managed the



linen service, and their great-great-uncle tended the gardens and the pecan and fig trees around the property.

As Dottie's niece Evelyn stamps out baby biscuits with the lid of a mustard jar, I watch as Dottie makes her prized sweet, crisp, fried pastry called pigs' ears (couchon d'oreille), topped with chewy caramel and toasted pecans.

"The trick is to roll the dough very thin, so that when it's cooked it's like a potato chip," says Dottie, flattening a ball of dough into a disk with a rolling pin. She slips it into a pot of shimmering oil and then places a carving fork in the center and gives a sharp twist. A ridged, spiraled round bobs to the surface looking, well, much like a pig's ear.

In the front hall, Boo's wife, Linda, catches up with her sister-in-law, Winnie, and another cousin, Elisabeth Perino, who has just arrived with her two girls, Madeleine and Adele. Several male cousins sit on the white-painted porch sipping Charlie's latest batch of barrel-aged moonshine, a whiskeylike spirit made from St.

John's sugar, which Dottie admits is "smooth, smooth, smooth".

AT ONE O'CLOCK, Evelyn announces that brunch is served. Everyone finds a seat at the enormous dining room table, where on every plate sits half a broiled pink grapefruit sweetened with a layer of St. John sugar. Then Dottie's dishes begin to appear, starting with a platter of buttery grits and spicy pork sausages served in a juicy mix of sautéed

onions, celery, and sweet peppers.

Next come eggs hussarde, an old Creole favorite composed of toasted english muffin halves heaped with smoky tasso (Cajun-style smoked pork), poached eggs, hollandaise sauce, and a red-wine reduction. Soon, the mirlitons arrive in a casserole dish with onions, celery, green peppers, and rock shrimp, under a golden cap of bread crumbs. Roasted plantains follow, along with the warm baby biscuits, one of which I split in half, coat with

When Dottie and Evelyn emerge from the kitchen with the monkey bread and pigs' ears, everyone begins to clap



Dottie with a platter of pigs' ears, right. Above, the menu. Facing page, brunch is served.

RECIPE

Couchon d'Oreille

(Pigs' Ears)

MAKES 12

These crisp confections are given a quick twist with a fork while they're frying, which causes them to look like—yes—pigs' ears.

1½ cups flour
½ tsp. salt
Vegetable oil
3 cups light muscovado sugar
(see page 106)
1 tbsp. butter
1 cup chopped pecans, toasted

1. Whisk together flour and salt in a large bowl. Add ½ cup plus 1 tbsp. water and stir with a wooden spoon to form a slightly sticky dough. Turn dough out onto a floured surface and knead gently into a ball. Divide dough into 12 equal pieces and roll each into a ball; cover with a clean towel.

2. Pour oil into a large pot to a depth of 2". Heat over medium-high heat until a deep-fry thermometer reads 375°. Working on a floured surface, roll each dough ball out into a thin 5½" circle and set aside, covered with a towel. Carefully drop dough circles one at a time into oil and, when each bobs to the surface and opens up completely, place a fork in the center and twist to form the "pig's ear". (The trick is to hold the fork in place for 10 seconds, then let go.) Continue frying, turning once, until light golden brown, about 2½ minutes. Transfer to a rack to let cool.

3. Put sugar and ½ cup water into a large saucepan and heat over medium heat until the syrup reaches 240° on a candy thermometer (the soft ball stage), 10-12 minutes. Remove from heat, add butter, and stir syrup until slightly thickened, 2-3 minutes. Working quickly, drizzle syrup evenly over the pigs' ears, allowing it to fill the crevices. Sprinkle with pecans while syrup is still hot; let cool.

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butter, and heap with some of Dottie's whole fig preserves.

When Dottie and Evelyn emerge from the kitchen with the monkey bread and pigs' ears, everyone begins to clap. The Sugar Queen has outdone herself. Boo's grandson, baby Eric, coos as the pastries make their way around the table. Eric's mother, Dana, plucks off several knobs of the sugar-shellacked monkey bread and drops them with a clink onto her dessert

plate. Then come the pigs' ears; Dana's husband, Charlie, snatches one from the serving platter and takes a bite, nodding with delight.

A screechy belch coming from the direction of the nearby sugar mill intrudes upon the lively brunch. Baby Eric's eyes widen with fright. "That's just the exhaust from the boilers popping off," says my cousin Dave nonchalantly.

"I tell you," adds John, "you walk in the front of that place and you

RECIPE

Sausages and Gravy with Stone-Ground Grits

SERVES 4

When making her version of this dish, Dottie Broussard poaches the sausages in a little water, boiling it down until it evaporates. The sausages then "scorch" in the pot in their own fat, creating browned bits that stick to the bottom, the base for a dark, rich gravy.

FOR THE GRITS:

2 cups (about $\frac{3}{4}$ lb.) old-fashioned white stone-ground grits
(see page 106)

Salt

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter

Freshly ground black pepper

Tabasco sauce

FOR THE SAUSAGES AND GRAVY:

8 fresh pork sausages (about 2 lbs.), pricked all over with a fork

2 ribs celery, finely chopped

1 large yellow onion, finely chopped

$\frac{1}{2}$ green bell pepper, cored, seeded, and finely chopped

Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1. For the grits: Bring 10 cups water to a boil in a large pot. Stir in the grits and 1 tbsp. salt and return to a boil while stirring constantly. Reduce heat to medium-low to maintain a gentle simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until grits are softened and very thick, about 1 hour. Stir in butter and season with salt, pepper, and Tabasco to taste. Cover grits and keep warm.

2. Meanwhile, make the sausages and gravy. Arrange the sausages in a single layer in the bottom of a large wide pot and cover with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water. Bring to a boil over medium heat and cook until water has evaporated and sausages have begun to brown in their own fat, about 15 minutes. Continue browning the sausages, turning occasionally, until deep golden brown on all sides, about 25 minutes more.

3. Transfer the sausages to a plate with tongs. Add celery, onions, peppers, and salt and pepper to the pot and cook, stirring and scraping up the browned bits, until deep golden brown, about 15 minutes. Return sausages to pot along with 2 cups water, reduce heat to medium, and simmer until vegetables are soft and liquid has reduced to a slightly thickened gravy, 16-18 minutes. Divide the sausages (with their gravy) and grits between 4 plates. Serve with Tabasco on the side.



Dottie Broussard's sausage and gravy with stone-ground grits—a classic Louisiana combination.

can't believe you can eat what comes out the back end!" Everyone laughs, especially Boo. As the piles of food dwindle on people's plates, several people get up to stretch their legs. I take my coffee over to an empty chair next to Charlie, who tells me he has to leave soon to get back to the fields.

"Were you ever tempted to find another line of work?" I ask. He smiles and looks up at the ceiling.

"When I got out of school, I wanted to get away from here for a while," he says. "Then I went to other places and realized I wanted to come back. My dad always said, 'You won't make a lot of money in this business, but you can make a good living.' And he's right. I've learned a lot from him—like working hard and not

giving up on the cane."

Before everyone disperses, Ginger rises from her seat and announces, "Time for a picture." We all follow her out to the front of the house and arrange ourselves on the porch steps. As I look out at the field of rustling green cane, I think about something Boo once told me: that sugarcane is extremely adaptable, capable of weathering both droughts and floods.

"Other crops are less hardy, but sugarcane survives," he assured me then.

If the past is any indicator of the future, I tell myself, then so will St. John. 🍌

THE PANTRY, page 106: Sources for Cajun-style smoked pork, muscovado sugar, and stone-ground grits.



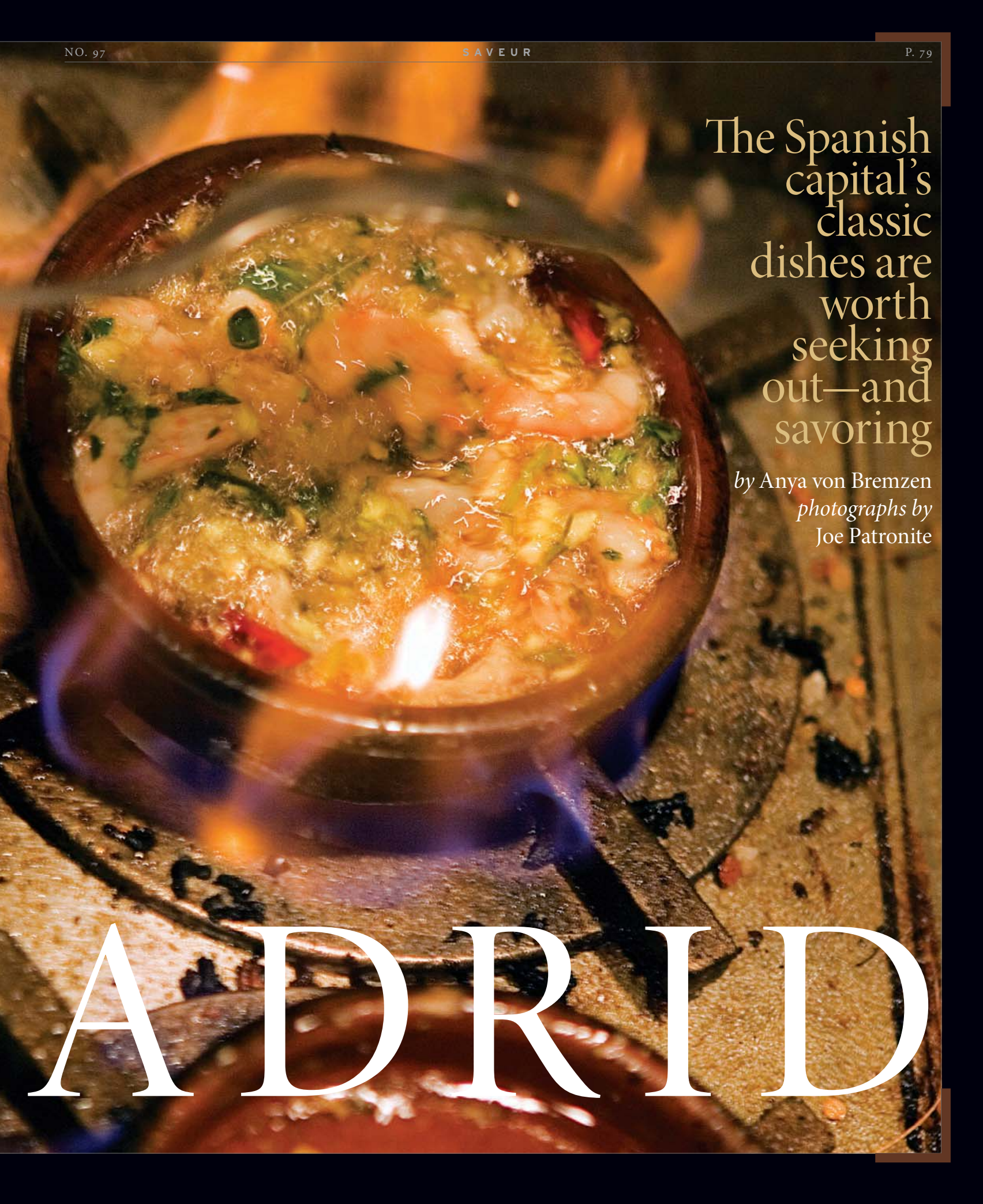
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Old-School M



The Spanish
capital's
classic
dishes are
worth
seeking
out—and
savoring

by Anya von Bremzen
photographs by
Joe Patronite

ADRID

At a swank Madrid restaurant recently, I was sampling gin and tonics rendered into pearl-like orbs with the aid of calcium chloride and a gazpacho sorbet flash-frozen in liquid nitrogen. The food was magical, but somehow it made me crave chick-peas and pigs' feet. Chronicling Spain's gastronomic revolution, as I've done for a decade now, has been an exhilarating ride on the wild side; yet during my last trip to Madrid I was overcome by an urge to say *basta* to



Above left, Royal Guard soldiers; right, patrons at La Casa del Abuelo. Right, tapas-style meatballs with a potato tortilla at Casa Lhardy. Previous pages, from left, Casa Lhardy; sizzling shrimp with garlic and parsley.

conceptual cooking and to revisit the classics. Perhaps I'd simply OD'd on metaphysical bonbons dished out by Ferran Adrià (the reigning prince of new Spanish cooking) wannabes. Or maybe it was the sight of the Tryp Reina Victoria hotel, once a famous torero hangout, gutted and reborn as the Hard Rock Hotel.

Only a few years ago, Madrid still felt like a frenetic, oversize village—a place where fast-talking locals packed dark-tiled bars and little old ladies gleefully fanned themselves in the stands at a gory corrida. But that Madrid is vanishing faster than a *ración* of ibérico ham at a tapas bar. Thanks to Mayor Alberto Ruiz Gallardón

and his relentless march toward modernization, the streets are a jumble of traffic and scaffolding. Old-order vermouth on tap is giving way to new-wave mojitos; Madrileños have gone loco for sushi. His grand construction projects nearing completion, Gallardón is close to transforming Madrid into a brash global capital.

Faced with that prospect, I decided to turn back the clock by basking in the burnished atmosphere and simple, dignified cooking of the city's stalwart *tabernas* (taverns), *marisquerías* (seafood places), and *casas de comidas*. The term for the last eludes precise definition but generally refers to

METHOD

Gambas al Ajillo

(Sizzling Shrimp with Garlic and Parsley)

This recipe from La Casa del Abuelo involves simmering shrimp in garlic- and chile-laced olive oil in cazuelas (earthenware dishes) atop flaming burners. For a source for hard-to-find Spanish ingredients and equipment, see page 106. Pile together $\frac{1}{3}$ packed cup flat-leaf parsley leaves and 8 large cloves garlic; sprinkle with salt; coarsely chop. Peel and devein 1½ lbs. medium shrimp. Divide 2 cups Spanish extra-virgin olive oil between four 6" cazuelas; heat them over medium heat. Divide garlic mixture, 4 bay leaves, and 4 dried chiles, such as guindilla or chiles de árbol, between the cazuelas and cook, stirring occasionally, until garlic is fragrant and sizzling, 2-3 minutes. Divide shrimp between the cazuelas and stir until shrimp is just cooked, 2-3 minutes. Season with salt to taste. Serve with chunks of bread to dip into the luscious, garlicky oil. Serves 4.

ANYA VON BREMZEN is a New York-based freelance writer and contributing editor at Travel and Leisure. Her latest cookbook is *The New Spanish Table* (Workman Publishing, 2006).



RECIPE

Albóndigas en Salsa

(Tapas-Style Meatballs)

SERVES 4

These saucy meatballs from Casa Alberto figure in a wide range of dishes that make up the constellation of little snacks served in tapas bars all over Madrid. Pick them up and pop them into your mouth with toothpicks. In the past, the discarded picks were tallied up so that the bar owner could compile the bill at the end of meal.

1½ lbs. coarsely ground beef
 1½ lbs. coarsely ground pork
 ½ cup fresh white bread crumbs
 ¼ cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
 4 eggs, lightly beaten
 8 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
 1 cup plus 2 tbsp. flour
 1 cup Spanish olive oil (see page 106)
 1 large yellow onion, chopped
 1 large leek, white part only, chopped
 1 dried bay leaf
 2½ cups beef broth
 1½ cups white wine

1. For the meatballs: Mix together the beef, pork, bread crumbs, parsley, eggs, 4 cloves garlic, and salt and pepper in a large bowl. Let chill for 1 hour. Put 1 cup flour into a bowl. Using wet hands, form meat mixture into 20 even-size meatballs. Roll each in flour; shake off excess; transfer to sheet pan.

2. Heat half the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Brown half the meatballs in the skillet, 10-12 minutes. Transfer meatballs to a plate. Wipe out skillet and repeat with remaining oil and meatballs, leaving oil and caramelized bits in skillet.

3. For the sauce: Heat skillet (with reserved oil) over medium-low heat. Add remaining garlic, onions, leeks, and bay leaf and cook until softened, 12-15 minutes. Add remaining flour; cook for 2 minutes. Whisk in broth and wine, raise heat to medium-high, and bring to a boil while whisking constantly. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer until thickened, 12-14 minutes. Let cool; discard bay leaf. Purée sauce in blender in batches. Return sauce to skillet along with meatballs; bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer until thickened and meatballs are cooked, 16-18 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Divide between four 6"-7" cazuelas (see page 106).



M A D R I D

R E C I P E

Croquetas de Jamón con Gambas

(Ham and Shrimp Croquettes)

MAKES 20

De la Riva breads its croquetas generously, which prevents them from bursting open when frying.

3 tbsp. butter
 1¼ cups flour
 3¼ cups milk, hot
 1 small yellow onion, chopped
 1 sprig flat-leaf parsley
 ⅓ lb. sliced serrano ham, chopped (see page 106)
 ⅓ lb. medium shrimp, peeled, deveined, and finely chopped
 Salt, to taste
 Spanish olive oil (see page 106)
 3 cups dried fine bread crumbs
 3 eggs, lightly beaten

1. Heat butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Add ¼ cup flour; cook until just golden, about 3 minutes. Whisk in milk, onions, and parsley; bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium; simmer, stirring frequently, until thick, 18-20 minutes. Strain sauce through a fine sieve. Return to saucepan with ham and shrimp; bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer until thick, 12-14 minutes. Season with salt. Chill overnight.

2. Pour olive oil into a large pot to a depth of 2". Heat until a thermometer registers 375°. Put remaining flour, bread crumbs, and eggs into 3 separate wide shallow dishes. Using flour-dusted hands, form 2 tbsp. chilled ham mixture into a 3"-long oval; dredge in flour, roll in eggs, then coat with bread crumbs. Shake off excess. Repeat to create another coating of eggs and bread crumbs (but not flour). Transfer to a plate. Repeat process to make 20 croquettes in all. Fry croquetas until golden, about 1½ minutes. Drain on paper towels.

establishments that do most of their business at lunch, have no written menus, function like a cross between a restaurant and a private dining club, and serve homey, market-driven cuisine. In short order, I plotted a Madrid eating adventure that would involve zero foam.

UNTIL 1561, when Spain's King Philip II moved his court to this former site of a Moorish fortress, Madrid had little serious cooking to speak of. Over time, the city



experienced a vast influx of migrants from all over the country, and today its cuisine represents an amalgam of regional styles. By some accounts, one major force sprang from the central region of La Mancha, which surrounds Madrid: La Manchans, also known as *manchegos*, ran taverns where coarse valdepeñas wines were complemented by folksy regional dishes like migas (fried bread bits) and gallina en pepitoria (hen in an almond sauce). From Andalusia, in the south, came frituras (fried "stuffs") and gazpacho. Later, Galicians from the north popularized *marisquerías*, captivating Madrid's residents with pristine shellfish from the chilly Atlantic. Then, in the early 1980s, the Basques, also from the north, ex-

ported their own version of nouvelle cuisine; Catalan disciples of Ferran Adrià followed. A melting pot, yes—but Madrid cooking retains its own, slightly rugged identity, defined by a handful of specialties: callos (a tripe stew), croquetas, roast lamb, a profusion of egg dishes, and, above all, cocido, an orgy of boiled meats, vegetables, and chickpeas.

Dreaming of a perfect cocido, I cross the Puerta del Sol with its iconic Tio Pepe sign suspended



Above left, ham and shrimp croquettes; right, plaza Mayor. Facing page, a waitress at Casa Lhardy.

above the traffic. My grail: Casa Lhardy, the grandest surviving monument to staid Madrid dining. The place is entered through its ground-floor deli-cum-tapas bar, a marbled cubbyhole squeezed behind a vintage façade of Cuban mahogany. Inside, patrician señoras in dowdy blazers help themselves to beef consommé from ornate silver samovars in a Madrid ritual that dates to the early 19th century. I ascend the tatty staircase to the main dining room and find myself inside a baroque painting—a plush chamber illuminated by Isabelline period chandeliers, with red velvet



I ascend Lhardy's staircase to the main dining room and find myself inside a baroque painting



chairs, dark varnished wallpaper, and a carved cupboard filled with ornate silver bowls.

Founded in 1839 by Emilio Lhardy, a chef of Swiss origin who had previously cooked in France, Lhardy soon became the most important restaurant in Madrid, patronized by monarchs, ministers, and celebrated artistes. Political coups were plotted in its private salons, particularly the Japanese Room, still resplendent in its faded Second Empire chinoiserie. Lhardy's kitchen—credited with introducing Parisian haute cuisine to the Spanish capital—continues to turn out such relics as veal orloff and tournedos rossini. What virtually everyone orders, though, is the cocido, miraculous for its improbable combination of excess and restraint.

First comes the noodle soup—light yet so densely flavorful it feels almost solid. Next, jacketed waiters ceremoniously pile one's plate with carrots, potatoes, cabbage, and the traditional meats: blood sausage, chorizo, a chicken breast, fresh pork sausages, ham, beef shin, and a homemade sausage called a *relleño*. But a good cocido madrileño is ultimately all about the chickpeas; cocido specialists are sometimes called *garbanceros*. Lhardy's garbanzos—a pedigreed variety from Fuentesauco, to the northwest—are supernally creamy and seemingly as weightless as popcorn.

DESPITE ALL the liquid nitrogen and calcium chloride being used today in Spain's kitchens, *cocina popular* isn't going the way of the dodo. Inspired by the country's newfound pride in its ingredients and cuisine, many old-school restaurants are dishing out food that's cleaner, purer, and more vital than ever before. Such reformed traditional cooking flourishes in Madrid's *casas de comidas*, and to go to the right *casa de comidas* is to feel like a true Madrid insider.

"We don't advertise; our



MADRID

Perfect BITES

As Madrid's historic heart falls prey to the tourist hordes, some old tapas bars are relaxing their standards, while others are being edged out by Cuban-themed cocktail joints. Hence, choreographing the perfect series of nibbles in the most appealing atmosphere can be a challenge. I start my own dance one evening near the plaza Santa Ana at **La Casa del Abuelo** (calle de la Victoria 12; 521-2319), a century-old haunt specializing in shrimp served a la gabardina (battered) or al ajillo (in garlic sauce). Nearby is **Las Bravas** (calle Álvarez Gato 3; 532-2620), dedicated to *patatas bravas*, a classic tapa of fried potatoes drizzled with a smooth, sharp, smoky, tomatoey sauce. The sauce is also served on potato tortillas, chicken wings, even pigs' ears—surprisingly delicious with an inexpensive glass of crisp, cool *rueda white*. Up next is **La Venencia** (calle de Echegaray 7; 429-7313), one of the last truly authentic bars left on the popular calle de Echegaray. Packed with old sherry barrels, the place is so woodsy and smoky it's like the inside of a frayed leather briefcase. Match a *fino*, *oloroso*, or *palo cortado* sherry with traditional Andalusian bites: stupendous fried *marcona* almonds, green olives that snap in your mouth, and tangy dry-cured tuna roe, all served with pointy crackers called *picos*. Hungry for something meaty, I continue on to **Casa Alberto** (calle las Huertas 18; 429-0706). Dating to 1827 and housed in a building where Cervantes once lived, it boasts a breathtaking interior that features a beautiful, oak-trimmed onyx counter and elaborate antique taps that still dispense vermouth and soda. I try the plump meatballs and a *cazuelita* of oxtail stew, then move on to **Casa Labra** (calle Tetuán 12; 531-0081). Located off the Puerta del Sol, Labra is renowned among Madrileños as the place where Spain's Socialist Party was founded, in 1879. I order one of the bar's fried salt cod specialties—*croquetas* and *tejas* (nuggets of the fish enrobed in a crisp, doughy batter)—get a glass of cheap red wine, and join the crowds on the pavement outside. The streets around Casa Labra might be a mess of construction, but some rituals live on. —A.V.B.

cliente is mainly friends of the house and their friends," says Juan José López Baemar, the owner of the stupendous La Tasquita de Enfrente, an olive's toss from the florid masonry of the Gran Vía boulevard. "Madrid has always been a ciudad familiar [a familiar, informal city]," López explains, "and casas de comidas are all about human contact." Neither classic nor cutting-edge, Tasquita's precise cooking epitomizes the culinary ethos of modern Madrid. López brings out fat little anchovies on a smear of tomato jam ringed by an aromatic puddle of olive oil, followed by an amazingly plush *revuelto* (scramble) of eggs, blood sausage, and pumpkin. Fried eggs with sautéed *angulas* (baby eels) give way to delicate white beans called *verdinas*, simmered in a broth bolstered by langoustine heads and served with sea urchins—an urbane riff on a soulful northern stew of white beans and clams. "My cooking is traditional," López declares, "but I constantly update it with better ingredients and techniques."

Another day, I search out De la Riva, a 74-year-old *casa de comidas* in the area around the Santiago Bernabéu soccer stadium. Weekday lunch hours, De la Riva is colonized by chain-smoking men playing *mus*, a popular Spanish card game. On weekends, when large families descend on the plain whitewashed room, the feeding frenzy can recall that of a Hong Kong dim sum emporium on a Sunday morning. "You don't come here for comfort or ambience—just eat and beat it," quips proprietor José Moran Harpeja. His menu is a litany of Madrid clas-

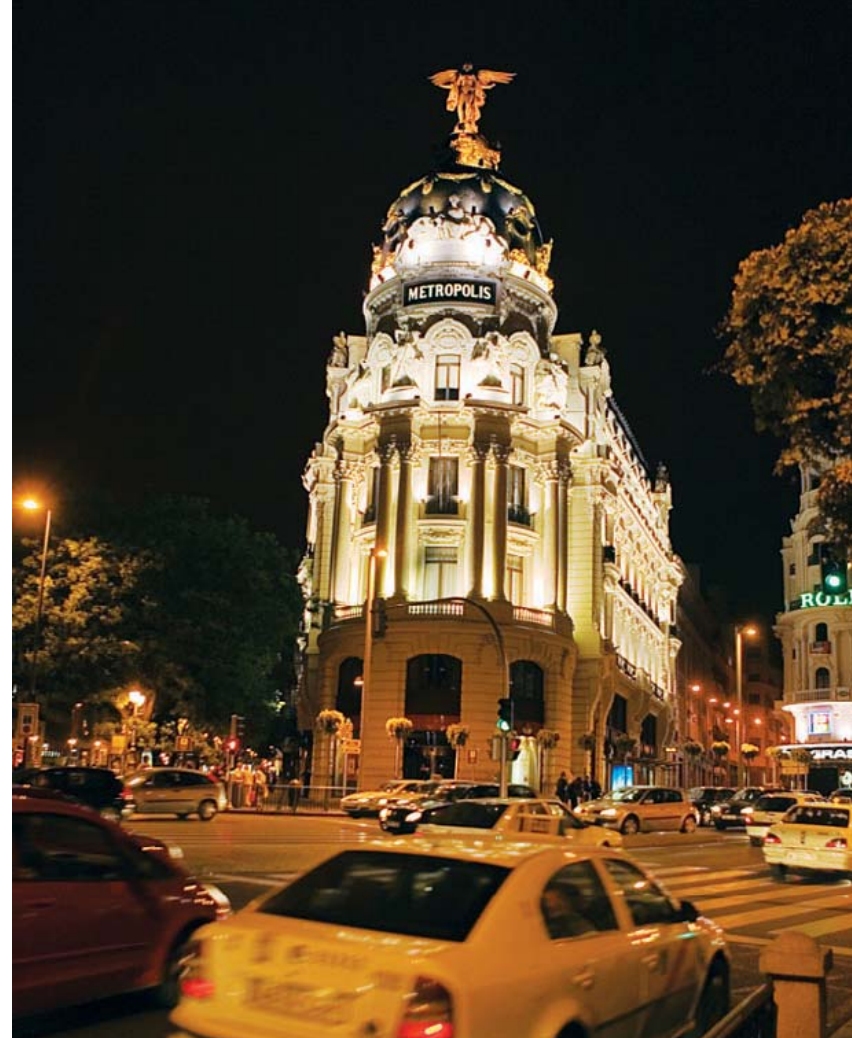
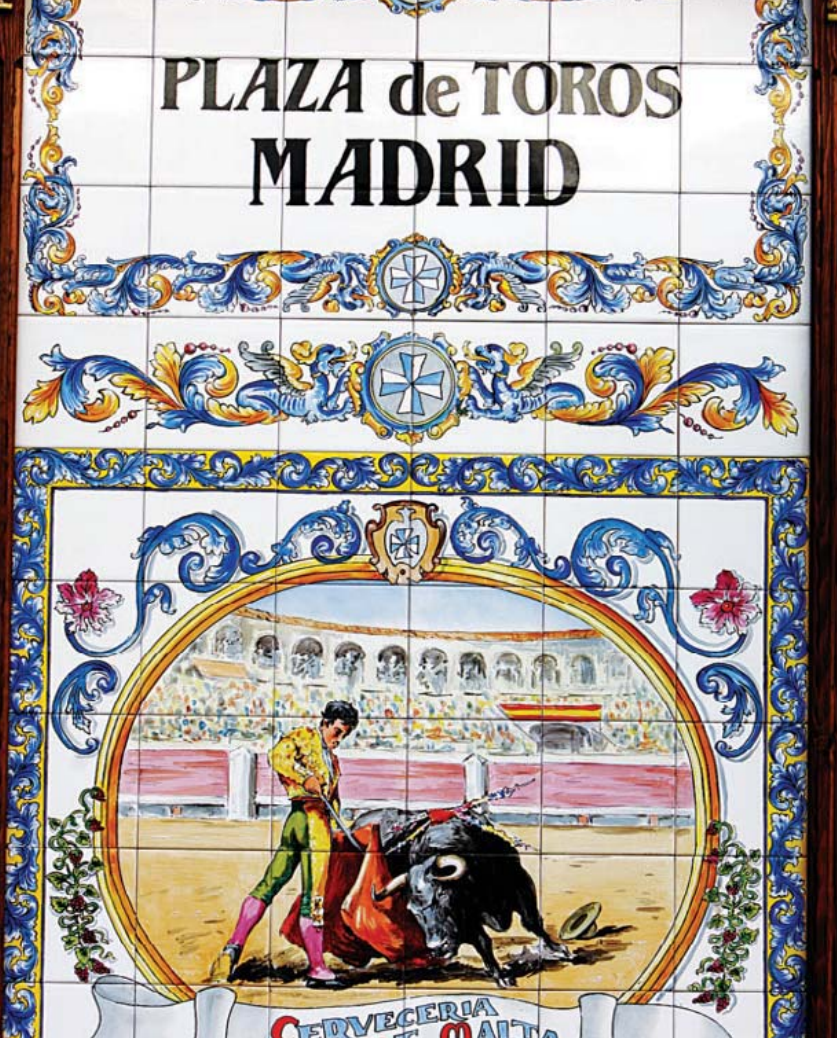
sics—ham and shrimp *croquetas*, potato tortillas, saucy meatballs, roasted sea bream, salt cod in tomato sauce, stews of braised oxtail or pigs' feet. For dessert, Moran offers the most sumptuous flan in town.

While *casas de comidas* are the current rage among local cognoscenti, traditionally Madrid has always been a city of taverns, so much so that a 17th-century refrain went, "Madrid ciudad bravilla... tenía trescientas tavernas y una sola librería [Madrid, a brave little city, 300 taverns and only one bookstore]." Many of the capital's early drinking and eating dens were clustered around calle Cava Baja, just south of the plaza Mayor. Madrid's restaurant row for more than three



The façade of the opulent Casa Lhardy, left, a temple of traditional Madrid dining and home to the perfect boiled dinner. Above, Angel Gonzalez Hernandez, manager of Casa Lucio and El Lando.

The owner brings out fat little anchovies on a smear of tomato jam ringed by an aromatic puddle of olive oil



MADRID

centuries, the narrow street continues to buzz with busy establishments. The most famous among them is Casa Lucio. To an outsider, Lucio might look undistinguished, but to Madrileños it is the most blue-chip *taberna* of them all. On my last visit to Lucio, I went with a Spanish TV starlet whose sultry looks helped us land a prime table. Dining at separate tables around us were the Duchess of Badajoz, the king's sister; novelist Mario Vargas Llosa; and a gentleman rumored to be Spain's richest man. Everyone was eating huevos estrellados, "smashed eggs", a legendary Lucio specialty of fried eggs broken up over french fries.

Reservations at Lucio are hard to come by, and the celebrity circus can be grating. But there is an alternative, called El Lando—Lucio's casual offshoot. "To be seen, you go to Lucio; to be left alone, you come here," says manager Angel Gonzalez Hernandez, who proceeds to wax rhapsodic about Woody Allen. Allen was apparently so impressed with El Lando's food that he asked for a giant doggie bag to take back to America. Tables here are set with house starters: tomato-rubbed bread, an impeccable salad of sliced tomatoes, and plates of ibérico ham handpicked by Gonzalez from a producer in Ávila, about 50 miles northwest of the city.

One of El Lando's great triumphs is callos, Madrid's emblematic tripe stew. In a days-long process, tripe from a butcher who's been supplying the restaurant for over 20 years is first cooked with veal, then rinsed in vinegar and

simmered again for five hours with chorizo, jamón, and blood sausage. The final layering of flavors comes from a *refrito* of sautéed onions, garlic, tomatoes, and pimentón, Spain's dusky smoked paprika. "The trick is letting the tripe rest overnight so that the cooking liquid seeps deep into the meat and thickens the sauce," Gonzalez tells me. The result? A stew so refined that it seems almost like an abstraction of tripe. And then there is the smashed-eggs dish served at Lucio. Batons of yellow Galician potatoes are cooked in good olive oil until they're crisp but still creamy inside; fresh farm eggs are gently fried. While letting the spuds soak up the rich, improbably bright orange yolk, I wonder why anyone needs deconstructive cuisine when simply prepared potatoes and eggs can taste so amazing.

YOU WOULDN'T think that a tripe-crazy town like this would be the place to find great seafood. Well, think again. Madrid happens to be one of the world's largest dry ports, snagging the best fish before it's shipped to the rest of the country. A lot of it ends up at O'Pazo, an exclusive, Galician-style seafood mecca hidden away on a residential street and populated with regulars, mostly men at lunch, who think nothing of dropping a hundred dollars on a few stunning cigalas (langoustines). The 73-year-old owner, Don Evaristo García, a tall, upright grandee in a dark suit and pink tie, circles the room. García came to Madrid from León, in northwestern Spain, as a boy and supported himself by hauling fish on his back to rich families.

"Nobody would let me into the elevator, because of the fish smell," he recalls. Today, García is Spain's preeminent seafood supplier and

RECIPE

Cocido Madrileño de Casa Lhardy

(Madrid-Style Boiled Dinner)

SERVES 8

For a source for hard-to-find ingredients, see THE PANTRY, page 106.

FOR THE RELLENO:

1/3 lb. ground veal
3/4 cup chunky fresh white bread crumbs
1/2 tbsp. chopped flat-leaf parsley
1 tsp. salt
3 slices bacon, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 egg, lightly beaten

FOR THE COCIDO:

1 lb. boneless beef shin
1 large carrot, peeled
1 smoked ham hock
1 veal knuckle bone
Salt, to taste

2 1/2 cups dried chickpeas (about 1 lb.), soaked overnight and drained
1 large bone-in chicken breast half (about 1 lb.)
1/2 lb. chunk serrano ham
1 small green cabbage, cored and finely sliced
1 1/3-lb. chunk fresh pork belly
6 5"-long breakfast sausages
2 Spanish chorizo sausages
2 morcilla sausages (Spanish blood sausages)
5 small yukon gold potatoes
1 cup (about 1/4 lb.) fideos (thin dried Spanish noodles)
2 cups warm tomato sauce

1. For the relleno: Mix together veal, bread crumbs, parsley, salt, bacon, garlic, and egg in a bowl. Tightly roll up in cheesecloth, and twist both ends to form a 2 1/2"-wide log. Tie ends with butchers' twine and wrap with plastic; let chill.

2. For the cocido: Fill a large pot with 4 1/2 quarts water. Add beef, carrot, hock, knuckle, and salt and bring to a boil; skim off scum. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, partially covered, until beef and hock are tender, about 2 hours. Chill beef, carrot, and hock. Strain broth and return to pot with knuckle; bring to a boil. Wrap chickpeas in cheesecloth and tie with twine; add to broth. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until tender, about 2 hours. Add relleno and chicken; simmer until chicken is cooked, 15-20 minutes. Chill chicken. Continue cooking until chickpeas are very tender and relleno is cooked, about 15 minutes more. Chill chickpeas and relleno. Strain broth (discard knuckle); return to pot.

3. Meanwhile, fill a large pot with 4 quarts water. Add ham, cabbage, and salt; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, covered, for 2 hours. Add belly and sausages; simmer, covered, until ham is very tender and belly is just tender, 45-50 minutes. Chill ham, belly, and sausages. Transfer cabbage to a bowl and keep warm. Reserve cabbage broth in pot.

4. Put potatoes into a saucepan; cover with salted water; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer until tender, about 30 minutes. Drain; keep warm. Bring reserved chickpea broth to a boil, add fideos, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer until tender, 18-20 minutes. Season noodle soup with salt.

5. To serve: Bring cabbage broth to a boil. Reheat cooked meats and vegetables in broth. Slice relleno, beef, carrot, chicken, and belly. Shred hock and ham; cut chorizo and morcilla into chunks. Put chickpeas on a platter; top with chicken, carrots, relleno, beef, and half the hock and ham. Put cabbage on a second platter; top with belly, breakfast sausages, and remaining hock and ham. Garnish with potatoes, chorizo, and morcilla. Serve soup with tomato sauce (to stir in) on the side. Spoon some cabbage broth over meat and vegetables to moisten.

Facing page, clockwise from upper left: a tile sign, outside a tapas bar, for Madrid's famous corrida; the Metropolis Building on Grand Vía; Madrid-style boiled dinner at Casa Lhardy; local legs.

I wonder why anyone needs deconstructive cuisine when simply prepared potatoes and eggs can taste so amazing

M A D R I D

counts the royal palace among his clients. “The secret is choosing,” García says, sniffing conspiratorially and pointing to his nose.

There’s a majestic austerity to a meal at O’Pazo: ingredients distilled to their essence, unencumbered by garnishes. The restaurant’s philosophy is summed up in a dis-

creet note on the menu: “Don’t ask for lemon if you want to appreciate the taste of our seafood.” And what seafood! I dig into a pile of fear-somely pricey percebes (Galician goose barnacles) that squirt sweet, primal juices all over my skirt when I break them apart. Next, I move on to camarones dotted with crunchy

R E C I P E

Flan

(Creamy Caramel Custard)

SERVES 8

The secret to making this smooth flan from the *casa de comidas* De la Riva is to bake the custard until it’s completely set around the edges but not in the middle (it should be a little wiggly), as it will gently finish cooking while it cools. If the flan is baked until the center is set, it won’t be as creamy.

FOR THE CARAMEL:

1 cup sugar
2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice

FOR THE CUSTARD:

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups milk
2 tsp. vanilla extract
1 2" strip lemon zest
6 eggs

1. For the caramel: Set a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 350°. Set a kettle of water on to boil. Combine 1 cup sugar and the lemon juice in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring with a fork, just until sugar dissolves, about 3 minutes. Stop stirring and let the sugar gradually caramelize until deep golden brown, about 4 minutes more. Remove from heat and carefully divide caramel between eight $\frac{3}{4}$ "-wide flan molds (6 oz. each; see page 106) or ramekins to form a layer in the bottom of each. Set the molds aside.

2. For the custard: Put 6 tbsp. sugar, milk, vanilla, and zest into a small pot. Bring just to a boil over medium-high heat, then remove from the heat. Discard the lemon zest. Whisk together the remaining sugar and eggs in a large bowl. Slowly pour the milk mixture into the egg mixture, whisking constantly, until well combined.

3. Arrange the molds in a deep baking dish and pour the milk-egg mixture evenly into them. Put the baking dish into the oven and pour in enough hot water from the kettle that it comes halfway up sides of the molds. Bake until flans are set around the edges but still slightly wiggly in the center when the sides are tapped with a spoon, about 30 minutes. Let flans rest in water bath for 5 minutes, then remove and transfer to the refrigerator to let chill completely.

4. To serve: Carefully run a sharp knife around edges of each mold. Dip the bottoms of each mold briefly into a bowl of hot water to warm them slightly. Invert the flans onto small plates, knock on the bottoms for good luck, and lift the molds off to reveal the flans.



Flan from De la Riva. Facing page, Don Evaristo García, owner of O’Pazo.

specks of coarse salt, then luminous clams bobbing in a parsley-flecked sauce so uncorrupted it seems a crime to dunk bread into it. Last comes a whole grilled turbot with taut, glistening flesh, washed down with the vivacious house albariño.

AFTER LUNCH I make a mental checklist of old Madrid eating rituals I’ve yet to indulge in on this trip. Savor a slab of turrón at Casa Mira, a specialist for more than 150 years in that honey-and-almond confection from Spain’s southeast. Dip

crisp churros into puddinglike hot chocolate at Chocolatería San Ginés. Eat the definitive gallina en pepitoria at Casa Ciriaco, one of Madrid’s most stately *tabernas*. My cell phone rings. It’s a friend inviting me to a new restaurant run by a rising-star chef. On my next visit, perhaps. 🍴

THE PANTRY, page 106: Sources for cazuelas, Spanish olive oils, dried guindilla chiles, serrano ham, blood sausages, chorizo, Spanish noodles, and flan molds.

A discreet note on O’Pazo’s menu reads, “Don’t ask for lemon if you want to appreciate the taste of our seafood”

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MADRID

THE GUIDE

MADRID

COUNTRY CODE: 34 AREA CODE: 91 EXCHANGE RATE: 1 euro = \$1.30

Dinner with drinks, tax, and tip:

EXPENSIVE Over \$100 MODERATE \$50–\$100 INEXPENSIVE Under \$50

WHERE TO STAY

HOTEL URBAN *carrera de San Jerónimo 34 (787 7770; www.derbyhotels.com)*. Rates: \$270–295 double. A short walk from the Ritz, this new boutique hotel espouses a different aesthetic, with 97 brazenly modern rooms, a splashy atrium lobby decorated with sculptures from Papua New Guinea, and a trendy restaurant, Europa Decó, that serves terrific contemporary cuisine. The Urban's Glass Bar is crowded with the children of the people who room at the Ritz.

THE RITZ HOTEL MADRID *plaza de la Lealtad 5 (701 6767; www.ritz.es)*. Rates: \$615 double. This 167-room grande dame has hosted heads of state and celebrities for over a century; it's the best place to savor Madrid's old-world charms. Though recently renovated, the guest rooms have lost none of their classic appeal. Even if you don't stay here, come for tea in the stained-glass-domed lobby or for drinks in the garden bar.

WHERE TO EAT

ANTIGUA PASTELERÍA DEL POZO *calle del Pozo 8 (522 3894)*. This delightful bakery, built in the 1830s, specializes in roscones (ring cakes) and hojaldre, a puff pastry and filled with pastry cream or cabello de ángel (candied squash).

BOTIN *calle de Cuchilleros 17 (366 4217)*. Moderate. Dating to 1725 and beloved by Hemingway, this is by some accounts the world's oldest restaurant.

The dining rooms are stunningly atmospheric, but the cooking, centered on roast suckling lamb and pig, has seen better days. Still, for a first-time visitor, Botin makes for an essential Madrid experience, and the appetizers, such as crisp morcilla (blood sausage), are perfectly fine.

CAFÉ GÍJON *paseo de Recoletos 21 (521 5425)*. Dating to 1888, this is Madrid's premier literary cafe, renowned for having hosted *tertulias*



(informal discussion sessions) with the city's most illustrious writers and intellectuals, including Federico García Lorca and Antonio Machado. The food is not extraordinary, but the place is great for lingering over a morning café con leche delivered by gracious waiters.

CASA CIRIACO *calle Mayor 84 (548 0620)*. Moderate. This staunchly traditional *taberna* has been famous for its gallina en pepitoria (hen stewed in an almond sauce) and its meaty braised

partridge since 1917. The waiters will likely tell you that Ciriaco is housed in a building from which an anarchist assassin threw a bomb at King Alfonso XIII and his bride, Victoria Eugenia, on their wedding day in 1906. (Alfonso survived, but many were killed.)

CASA LHARDY *carrera de San Jerónimo 8 (522 2207)*. Moderate. A grand exemplar of old Madrid, this place has one of the most famous cocidos (boiled dinners) in town. Don't even think of ordering anything else, and end your meal with the baked alaska, another house specialty. The tapas bar downstairs is a great place to have a sherry and a cup of consommé and to stock up on traditional Spanish delicacies like partridge in escabeche.

CASA LUCIO *cava Baja 35 (365 3252)*. Expensive. This classic Castilian *mesón* is patronized by the city's elite, including the royal family. The specialties include roast suckling pig and lamb, incredible ibérico ham, and huevos estrellados (fried eggs broken up over french fries). Book way in advance, or eat at the front-room tapas bar, which is known for its ham and its oysters.

CASA MIRA *carrera de San Jerónimo 30 (429 8895)*. This diminutive shop has been in the same family for over 150 years. Its specialty is turrón, the addictive honey-and-almond nougat from Alicante, sold here in many varieties. Try the luscious turrón de yema (egg yolk nougat) and the crumbly polvorones (butter cookies).

CHOCOLATERÍA SAN GINÉS *pasadizo de San Ginés 5 (365 6546)*. Appointed in marble and perpetually mobbed, this ancient café has the best churros in town, traditionally eaten dipped in hot chocolate so rich and thick it could qualify

as an alternative energy source. The place is especially lively in the wee hours, when it fills with revelers from the nearby nightclubs.

DE LA RIVA *Cochabamba 13 (458 8954)*. Moderate. This classic *casa de comidas* has a simple décor and a market-inspired menu that changes daily. The best time to come is for a weekend lunch—but because it's so popular, reserve well in advance.

EL LANDO *plaza Gabriel Miró 8 (366 7681)*. Expensive. Lucio's more casual offshoot has a menu similar to its cousin's—minus the attitude—and a warm, traditional atmosphere. Try the callos (tripe) and the baby lamb chops.

O'PAZO *calle Reina Mercedes 20 (553 2333)*. Expensive. Seafood lovers from all over Spain consider O'Pazo a mecca. The luminous fish and shellfish are sold mostly by weight and unadorned, just as they should be. The experience can be costly, especially if you order delicacies like percebes (goose barnacles) and cigalas (langoustines), but is worth every cent.

LA TASQUITA DE ENFRENTA *calle Ballesta 6 (532 5449)*. Moderate. This lunch spot is more like a private eating club, frequented by famous writers and politicians. There's no menu; the owner just recites the daily specials, which might include an elegant salad, amazing wild sea bass, or a fragrant sauté of porcini.



Coming Home to Cafe Annie

After 25 years, a Houston institution beckons with flavors that are as thrilling as ever

{ BY MARGO TRUE PHOTOGRAPHS BY PENNY DE LOS SANTOS }

FOURTEEN YEARS AGO, I did something that changed my life. I was working at my first magazine job, as a copy editor for *Houston Metropolitan* magazine, when I got an invitation to a lunch at Cafe Annie, arguably the best restaurant in town. Being fairly new to Texas, I didn't know that the restaurant's chef, Robert Del Grande, had helped pioneer Southwestern cuisine in the early '80s or how white-hot that culinary movement had been and still was. I wasn't aware that national food critics were raving about this chile-spiked hybrid of French techniques and Mexican and local ingredients, or that restaurants all over the country were beginning to liven up their menus with things like cilantro-flavored crab cakes and chipotle beurre blanc, or even that "Betty Crocker" had released a Southwestern cookbook.

That day at Cafe Annie, all I knew was that the food—cream biscuits with spicy shrimp filling, short ribs in smoky

Facing page, a waiter at Café Annie, a restaurant famed for its smart, spicy cuisine.



Salmon Team ©
SM Cesar Sal
— 0 —
Mr. RIVERO ©

CAFE ANNIE

chile sauce, and buttery almond cake, all paired with wines that lifted the flavors into some sort of fifth dimension—was like nothing I'd ever eaten before. It was skillful yet wild, as thrilling as Thoroughbreds hurtling around a racetrack. Out of complete naïveté, I called the restaurant the next day and asked if I could work as an unpaid apprentice.

Amazingly, the restaurant let me in, and for nearly six months I went there once a week, starting out at rock bottom—I didn't even

know how to hold a knife correctly. I learned how to plate food, grill steaks, and "mince" (chop a food so finely that your wrist aches, as I soon figured out). I discovered how dishes are created, and I saw how Mimi Del Grande, Robert's wife, took care of her staff and customers as if they were family. I began to understand what it took to give a restaurant real personality, even soul. My time at Cafe Annie set me on a course as a food writer. Two years later I moved to New York, but I never lost my taste for the energetic flavors of Southwestern food.

Not long after I left, though, the cuisine started to change, dissipating as it spread to the rest of the country. Most of the Texas chefs who pioneered it moved on, broadening their repertoires. In the meantime, mainstream establishments like Chipotle Grill co-opted the Southwestern label. Now the fast-food behemoths have, too—McDonald's being the most recent, with its "Fiesta Salad". There have been murmurs about the demise of Southwestern cuisine. Could something so appealing really vanish?

This year marks Cafe Annie's 25th anniversary, and, feeling slightly anxious about the state of Southwestern food, I went to Texas to wish

**I REALIZED THAT GREAT FOOD
DOESN'T DEPEND ON A TREND, EVEN
THOUGH IT MAY RIDE THAT WAVE**

the restaurant well. I ended up hearing a story of revolution and evolution and realized, all over again, that great food doesn't depend on a trend, even though it might ride that wave for a while.

IN HOUSTON 25 years ago, "fine dining" usually meant French. Robert was working, for fun, in the kitchen of Cafe Annie, a recently opened bistro, owned by Mimi's sister and brother-in-law, Candice and Lonnie Schiller. His time there was supposed to represent a break after graduate school (he'd just finished a Ph.D. in biochemistry, at the University of California, Riverside). But he was a natural in the kitchen, and within six months he was running the place. Within another two he got caught up in the culinary revolution sweeping America. Nouvelle cuisine had overturned the canon of classical cooking in France, and French-trained chefs in the United States also began to reinvent their food, using American ingredients. "We didn't have to do sole meunière anymore, and we could use our local produce," Robert remembered, as we sat in Cafe Annie's warmly lit, mahogany-paneled dining room, eating a terrine of smoky huitlacoche (Mexican corn fungus) and silky foie gras.

The menu at Cafe Annie changed in increments. Because he was a fan of mesquite-smoked Texas barbecue, Robert started to mesquite-grill legs of lamb. "We didn't call it fusion back then. We said we were serving French cuisine with a twist." His herb man started offering him

Facing page, black bean nachos with red chile beef are a piquant—and beloved—appetizer at Cafe Annie.

RECIPE

Black Bean Nachos with Red Chile Beef

SERVES 8

To order hard-to-find Mexican ingredients, see THE PANTRY, page 106.

9 dried guajillo chiles, stemmed and seeded	1 canned chipotle chile in adobo
1½ cups chicken broth	2 tbsp. peanut oil, plus more for frying
⅛ tsp. toasted cumin seeds	2 tbsp. chopped cilantro, plus 16 sprigs
3 cloves garlic, roughly chopped	2 tsp. fresh lime juice
1 small bay leaf	1 tsp. walnut oil
Salt, to taste	2 avocados, peeled and cubed
1 tbsp. olive oil	1 serrano chile, finely chopped
1 lb. skirt steak, finely chopped	16 6" corn tortillas, each cut into 4 long triangles
¼ lb. Mexican chorizo, casing removed, finely crumbled	2 cups grated monterey jack cheese
2 slices bacon	1⅓ cups crème fraîche
½ lb. dried black beans, rinsed	½ cup crumbled cotija cheese
2 tomatoes, roughly chopped	4–6 jalapeños, thinly sliced
1 medium white onion, roughly chopped	
1 dried ancho chile, stemmed and seeded	

1. Toast guajillo chiles on a baking sheet in a 350° oven for 5 minutes. Soak in warm water until soft, about 30 minutes. Drain. Purée chiles, broth, cumin, 2 cloves garlic, bay leaf, and salt. Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Brown steak and chorizo in 2 batches, about 5 minutes each. Drain. Return to skillet with purée; simmer on medium-low until thick, about 15 minutes. Chill.

2. Cook bacon in a skillet over medium heat until just crisp, 6–7 minutes. Transfer to a pot; reserve fat. Add remaining garlic, black beans, half the tomatoes and onions, ancho and chipotle chiles, and 5 cups water; bring to a boil. Simmer over medium-low heat, partially covered, until soft, about 2½ hours. Let cool. Purée beans. Heat 2 tbsp. peanut oil and reserved bacon fat in a skillet over medium-high heat. Fry bean purée until thick, 8–10 minutes. Season with salt.

3. Mix remaining onions, remaining tomatoes, chopped cilantro, lime juice, walnut oil, avocados, serrano chiles, and salt to make an avocado relish. Pour peanut oil into a pot to a depth of 2"; heat to 350° on a deep-fry thermometer. Fry tortillas until crisp, about 1 minute. Drain on paper towels; sprinkle with salt.

4. Preheat broiler. Heat beef and beans. Divide chips between baking sheets; top each chip with beans, beef, and monterey jack; broil briefly to melt. Top each nacho with avocado relish, crème fraîche, cotija, jalapeño, and cilantro sprigs.

MARGO TRUE is the food editor for *Sunset*. Her last article for *SAVEUR* was "Wine for the Family", in the October 2006 issue.





CAFE ANNIE

RECIPE

Rabbit Enchiladas with Red Mole

SERVES 6

To order hard-to-find Mexican ingredients, see THE PANTRY, page 106.

14 tbsp. peanut oil
 1 whole rabbit (about 3 lbs.), quartered and patted dry
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
 2 cloves garlic, halved
 2 small white onions, chopped
 1/4 cup almonds, roughly chopped
 1/4 cup pecans, roughly chopped
 1/4 cup pumpkin seeds, roughly chopped
 4 guajillo chiles, stemmed, seeded, torn into large pieces
 2 ancho chiles, stemmed, seeded, torn into large pieces
 2 pasilla chiles, stemmed, seeded, torn into large pieces
 1/4 cup raisins
 1/4 tsp. dried oregano
 1/4 tsp. fennel seeds
 6 whole allspice
 14 thick 5"-6" white corn tortillas (2 quartered; 12 whole)
 1 large ripe tomato, cored and quartered
 1/4 cup roughly chopped unsweetened chocolate (about 1 oz.)
 2 cups grated monterey jack cheese
 1/2 cup crème fraîche
 1/2 cup finely crumbled cotija cheese
 6 sprigs cilantro

1. Heat 2 tbsp. oil in a large deep skillet over medium heat. Brown rabbit in batches, 4-5 minutes per batch. Combine rabbit and 5 cups water in the skillet; season with salt and pepper. Simmer, covered, until cooked, about 35 minutes. Transfer rabbit to a plate; reserve 4 cups broth.

2. Heat 1/4 cup oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add garlic and half the onions; cook until golden brown, about 8 minutes. Add nuts and pumpkin seeds and cook for 2-3 minutes. Add chiles; cook for 2-3 minutes. Add raisins, oregano, fennel seeds, allspice, quartered tortillas, and tomatoes; cook until softened, 2-3 minutes. Add reserved broth; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, covered, until slightly thickened, about 40 minutes. Let cool. Purée chile mixture in a blender until smooth. Transfer along with chocolate to a medium pot; bring mole to a simmer over medium heat. Add rabbit and salt, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer until thickened, 40 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer rabbit to a plate. Shred meat and discard bones. Toss rabbit and 1 cup mole in a bowl; reserve remaining mole.

3. Preheat oven to 350°. Heat remaining oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Fry remaining tortillas until soft, 4-5 seconds. Transfer tortillas to a paper towel-lined plate. Working with 1 tortilla at a time, spread about 1 tbsp. mole over top, add a little rabbit, and roll up. Arrange in a 10" x 14" baking dish; cover with 3/4 cup mole; sprinkle with remaining onions and monterey jack. Loosely cover with foil; bake until bubbly, 35-40 minutes.

4. Divide enchiladas between 6 plates. Reheat remaining mole, spoon a little over each, and garnish with crème fraîche, cotija, cilantro, and avocado relish used in the black bean nachos (see page 92), if you like.

Mexican favorites like fresh hoja santa, an herb with an anise-like taste, and the cooks in the kitchen, most of whom were Mexican, would bring in chiles and tortillas for staff meals. One of the heroes of nouvelle cuisine, Paul Bocuse, visited Cafe Annie and wolfed down the staff lunch of brain tacos with black beans and scrambled eggs.

About then, Robert unwittingly made what he calls "the crossroads dish". Cafe Annie was serving roasted leg and loin of rabbit in mustard sauce, a classic French preparation. "The front ends were piling up, so I made enchiladas. I had no idea what I was doing." They were such a hit with the staff that he decided to serve the rest. The waiters headed bravely out into the dining room to sell the stylishly plated rabbit enchiladas, born of French technique. After an hour and a half, not one had been served. Worse, the customers were laughing at what sounded like lowbrow Mexican food. "I told the waiters, 'If they laugh, they get it for free.' The enchiladas started flying out of the kitchen. And guess what started piling up: the *back* ends. So, we started putting those in the enchiladas, too." Cafe Annie had crossed over, and it wasn't long before the rest of the menu followed.

Then came another pivotal moment. In 1984, Robert's friend Amy Ferguson, the chef at Charley's 517 in Houston, invited him to a pot-

"INSTEAD OF PUTTING IN THREE CHILES," SAYS DEL GRANDE, "WE'D PUT IN TEN AND MAKE IT SCREAM"

luck dinner in Dallas. The host was Anne Lindsay Greer, a cooking teacher and consultant for the Loews Anatole Hotel there. Greer had been noticing that certain chefs seemed to be singing the same Southwestern tune, and she thought they should meet—and, together, get their cooking out beyond Texas. Robert brought ancho chile jam. At Greer's house, he met the two other chefs who would be the most active in defining Texas-style Southwestern food: Dean Fearing, who went on to become the legendary chef at the Mansion on Turtle Creek, in Dallas, and Stephan Pyles (who has also just opened a dazzling new Dallas restaurant named after himself, focused mainly on Latin America), of Routh Street Cafe and Star Canyon. All six of the chefs invited to the dinner—the others were Avner Samuel, then the chef at the Mansion, and Kevin Hopkins, from the Loews Anatole—were between the ages of 28 and 32 and ready to make a name for themselves.

The group continued to meet, and Greer made sure they received publicity, inviting writers like Ellen Brown of *USA Today* and Michael Bauer of the *Dallas Times Herald*, apparently the first person to use the term "new Southwestern cuisine". Not everything from those days was culinary gold. "Instead of using three or four chiles and have a dish be delicate, we'd put in ten, make it scream," Robert remembers. Writer Alison Cook composed a hilarious diatribe for *Texas Monthly* on the subversion of "real Texas food", citing "mesquite abusers and cilantro junkies".

But the fireworks were unstoppable. Within a year, Greer's chefs

Facing page, clockwise from top left: chanterelle mushrooms; Robert Del Grande; rabbit enchiladas with red mole sauce; well-worn skillets in the kitchen.

CAFE ANNIE

were all over the place: at an American Institute of Wine and Food dinner in Dallas for Julia Child; at fund-raisers on both coasts; at dinners for visiting celebrity chefs at the Loews Anatole. A number of remarkable talents in California were cooking Southwestern, too: John Sedlar, at Manhattan Beach's St. Estèphe; Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger, of Los Angeles's Border Grill and City Cafe; and Mark Miller, at Fourth Street Grill in Berkeley (and, later, at Santa Fe's Coyote Cafe). By the early '90s, dozens of articles had been written on this "outlaw" cuisine, with its appealingly rule-breaking ways. Cafe Annie was repeatedly named one of the best restaurants in the country

DEL GRANDE HAS STAYED THE TRUEST TO THE STYLE HE BEGAN WITH, ONE ROOTED IN MEXICO

by *Gourmet* and the Zagat guides. In partnership with the Schillers, Mimi and Robert spun off a chain of upscale fast-food places called Cafe Express; Rio Ranch, a big, handsome restaurant serving Texas comfort food; and Taco Milagro, an elegant version of a taco stand.

Cafe Annie, though, has always been the heart of the operation. And of the original Southwestern chefs, Robert has stayed the truest to the style he began with, one rooted in Mexico. What keeps him there, when a world of cuisines could be explored?

ROBERT BENDS OVER a slice of black bean terrine, spooning on salsa with the concentration of a man at a microscope. We're in Cafe Annie's kitchen, and he's cooking his way through several of his signature dishes in a sort of edible illustration of what he's thought about over the years. The place looks exactly as I remembered it, with the narrow line of stoves and grills arranged behind the pickup windows. A stack of saucepans sits near the stoves, so banged up and pitted that they're beautiful.

It's been a rough few years for Robert. Business shrank after 9/11—it has since rebounded—and he was diagnosed with prostate cancer four years ago. Luckily, he is now cancer-free, and although his hair is grayer, it's still boyishly tousled. If anything, his tribulations have made him more thoughtful. "I think I have more aesthetic wisdom now, more subtlety," he says. "Sometimes I get criticized for not being as innovative as I once was, but does food really have to be strange? Or can we find something new, wrapped in the spirit of the restaurant?"

Robert slices through the midnight black crust of a coffee-crusted beef tenderloin—a dish he devised totally by chance sometime in the mid-1990s. Early one Christmas morning, he accidentally spilled ground coffee all over the cutting board he was about to use for fixing beef filets for dinner. He thought back on a conversation he'd once had with a friend about the meaty quality of coffee. In a second he was rolling the filets in the coffee. The ground beans formed a rich, unctuous crust—and the beef became his most copied entrée. Right now, apparently, it's big in Seattle. "That's why we have to keep changing it," he says. He's added different spices to the coffee over the years, from sage to cinnamon, and constantly invents new accompaniments. Today he's serving it with wild mushrooms and a sauce of roasted onion, pasilla chiles, espresso, and cream.

What inspires Robert the most? "A simple process leading to a complex effect," he says. That's why he loves making redfish wrapped in a banana leaf, from the current menu. "All of it cooks together; you open it and it's good to go." He assembles a package of onions, halved shrimp, a few tarragon leaves, a jalapeño, and a redfish filet, dabs on some garlic butter, folds it up, and pops it into the steamer. Half an hour later, it's ready: a buttery morsel of fish, with the intertwined flavors of serrano and tarragon.

Next up: black bean nachos with red chile beef. These are from Bar Annie, the restaurant-within-a-restaurant arranged around Cafe Annie's bar, created two years ago. Its prices are lower, and its menu consists of a list of instant additions: jumbo Gulf shrimp cocktail, fried chicken salad, hand-made onion rings. Robert constructs a platterful of nachos, each chip supporting a mound of refried black beans, spicy beef, shreds of buttery cheese, avocado relish, a drizzle of crème fraîche, and grated parmigiano-like cotija cheese, topped with a thin slice of jalapeño.

After 25 years at Cafe Annie, Robert is comfortable with his food in a way few chefs seem to be, and he feels the satisfactions of going deeper in rather than farther out. That said, his menu is looser than it once was. Along with mainstays like crab tostadas, there are dishes free of identifiably Southwestern ingredients, and others that blend in other cultures—yellowfin tuna with bok choy and preserved lemons, for instance. To me, eating here again is like being with an old friend who happens to have acquired some great new clothes.

"In the beginning, we were trying to do something we could call 'Southwestern,'" says Robert. "Now I never think about it. You know, you don't have to have signs on the wall saying there's no place like home. You *know* you're home." 🍴

THE PANTRY, page 106: Contact information for Cafe Annie, plus sources for dried chiles, chorizo, and cotija.

Facing page, coffee-crusted beef tenderloin, a dish that Del Grande invented by accident.

METHOD

Coffee-Crusted Beef Tenderloin

When Del Grande invented this dish, its simplicity shocked him. Something that tasted this good, he thought, surely must be harder to make. Toast 4 stemmed seeded guajillo chiles and 2 stemmed seeded ancho chiles (see page 106) in a skillet over medium heat for 4-5 minutes; soak in warm water until soft, about 30 minutes. Purée chiles, 1 cup soaking liquid, 4 chopped cloves garlic, 2 chipotle chiles in adobo, and 1/2 chopped small white onion in a blender until smooth. Heat 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Add purée, reduce heat, and simmer until thickened, about 30 minutes. Add 2 tbsp. light brown sugar, 2 tbsp. red wine vinegar, 1 tsp. salt, and 1/4 tsp. pepper; simmer until thickened, 12-14 minutes more; let sauce cool. Preheat oven to 400°. Tie a 2-lb. piece of beef tenderloin with butcher's twine at 1/2" intervals. Rub with 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, 1 1/2 tsp. coarse sea salt, and 1/2 tsp. pepper; brush all over with 2 tbsp. sauce (save remainder for another use). Combine 3 tbsp. very finely ground coffee, 1 tbsp. cocoa powder, and 1/8 tsp. ground cinnamon; roll beef in mixture to coat. Place beef on a rack in a roasting pan; let sit for 30 minutes. Roast for 10 minutes; reduce temperature to 225° and continue roasting until a thermometer inserted in the thickest part reads 125°, about 50 minutes. Let rest for 15 minutes. Remove twine and slice. Serves 6.



Tea for Two Hundred Million

Americans turn on to the time-honored taste of specialty teas.

We've been in this business since 1995 and there's been a definite surge in interest in specialty teas in the past five years and especially in the past two," says Linda Villano, owner of Serendipitea, a loose tea blender and wholesaler in New York. Research pointing to tea's health benefits, said to be similar to those ascribed to red wine, are a major reason for the uptick, Villano says.

"There are the health benefits, of course," agrees Jonathan Sims, co-owner of the Tea Embassy in Austin, TX. "But there's also an element of discovery. Each culture —Russia, Turkey, Morocco, China, Japan— has its own way of preparing and serving tea."

Exploring tea is like exploring wine, Sims notes. There are different tastes from different varieties grown in one location, and different tastes from the same variety grown in different locations. Blending and the addition of herbs or fruits makes tea at least as facile as wine, with each step or ingredient

adding subtle layers of taste and complexity. There's a tea for every mood and moment, and finding the perfect brew can be a lifelong quest.

While they may appreciate the extra dose of antioxidants in an aromatic cup of fine Formosa Pi Lo Chun, culinary enthusiasts seem to be most interested in the wide variety of tastes and its use as a cooking ingredient.

Are you ready for a restaurant with a tea sommelier?

"There are a few restaurants that have people who describe themselves as tea sommeliers," Linda Villano says.

Blending and the addition of herbs or fruits makes tea at least as facile as wine, with each step or ingredient adding subtle layers of taste and complexity.

"The variety of tastes is so wide, they help guide diners in the selection of teas to complement their food selections. We work with chefs on food pairings, suggesting different teas for their menu selections. We even custom-blend teas to accompany specific dishes."

Reaching well beyond the familiar box of generic tea bags, specialty suppliers are broadening the range and availability of fine tea. Sympatea USA has come up with an ingenious solution to the difficulties of brewing: a spoon that serves as both packaging and infuser. The "spoon" is a mini-tea basket that comes individually wrapped in airtight foil to protect the subtle flavor and aroma of the tea.

"When the package is stirred in hot water, the tea brews



quickly and, when lifted out, the packaging absorbs any remaining water, preventing drips and 'tea bag mess,'" says Ozlem Ozsirin, CEO of Sympatea USA. "And because the packaging is air-tight, it preserves the flavor and quality of the tea for a very long time, up to three years."

of techno-savvy are also hallmarks at Mint Brook Meadow Teas, an Ohio company that grows mint and sells blended and herbal teas.

"We're in a community of Amish and Mennonite families," explains co-owner Dan Tropea. "The community has always

This makes it easy for restaurants, cafes, even convenience stores, to stock and sell high-quality tea.

The folks at Ekaterina's Imperial Porcelain & Tea tackled the same problem from a different angle. Originally an importer of handmade Russian Lomonosov porcelain teapots and samovars, Ekaterina's got enough interest from restaurants that they began working with a maker of commercial tea brewing equipment and came up with a programmable brewer that can be adjusted to brew any kind of loose tea.

"Green tea is brewed at a lower temperature than black tea," Bougaeu says. "Our machine has buttons on the front, like a microwave, so the servers don't need to know about each of the teas. They just push the button for the type of tea and the machine does the rest."

A respect for tradition and a touch

grown mint for its own use and processed it the traditional way, hanging it to dry. I discovered there was a big market for the high-quality mint we grow."

The company has moved beyond supplying mint to other tea makers, importing Black Sea teas grown on traditional organic farms and creating its own blends.

Since Mint Brook Meadow farms organically without herbicides, the fields have to be weeded by hand.

It's just that kind of respect for tradition, whether found in the fields at Mint Brook Meadow, in handmade Lomonosov teapots or in the careful selection and blending of leaves at the Tea Embassy, Serendipitea and Sympatea, that gives tea—and tea culture—its richness and rewards its devotees with transcendent tastes and experiences.





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IN THE SAVEUR KITCHEN

Techniques and Discoveries from Our Favorite Room in the House » Edited by Todd Coleman



consulting editor and expert in Chinese cooking, walked me through the recipe for chef Jerome Leung's version of that dish (see page 50), she offered a few cautionary words. "Buy your rice wine at a Chinese liquor store," she said. "The kind available at Asian supermarkets tends to be harsh and unpleasant. It's always best to cook with a wine you'd actually want to drink."

One sip of supermarket rice wine proved Grace's point and prompted me to wonder why I hadn't accorded rice wine the same reverence I do European ingredients like balsamic vinegar and extra-virgin olive oil. I asked Grace to take me down to Mark's Wine & Spirits, a 70-year-old shop in Manhattan's Chinatown, for a much needed rice wine tutorial.

Peter Woo, a longtime employee, now semiretired, welcomed us into the store. Leading us among the shelves and pointing out some of his favorite brands—including Wuliangye, from a producer in Sichuan that boasts 600-year-old cellars, and Kweichow Moutai, from Guizhou, a favorite among Chinese diplomats—Woo told us that what we call rice wine isn't really wine at all, and it's not made exclusively from rice. It's actually a liquor, he said, distilled from different combinations of fermented rice, sorghum, millet, wheat, and corn.

When it came time to taste, Woo said we would be trying shaoxing jiu, a well-known variety named for the city in the eastern province of Zhejiang where it's produced. Also called yellow wine because of its color, shaoxing jiu is brewed from spring water, rice, glutinous rice, yeast, and often millet and is then aged in earthenware jars for sometimes as long as 20 years. While all the varieties we tasted bore a resemblance to sherry, they also displayed a surprising complexity and range (see tasting notes, below). A delightful discovery, and long overdue. —Todd Coleman

Rice Wine 101

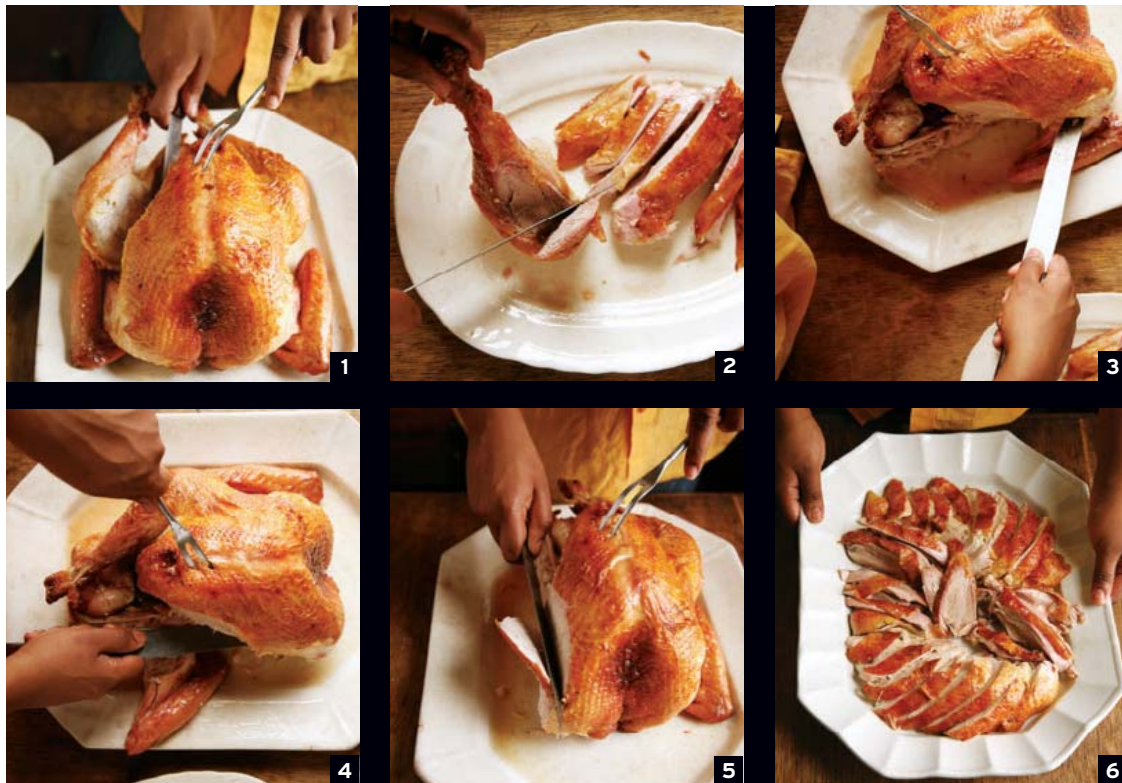
These Chinese spirits are good enough to guzzle

YEARS AGO I learned to avoid supermarket-variety wine labeled "cooking", as it's typically laden with salt and of very poor quality. But I'd never exercised the same discretion with Chinese rice wine, a key ingredient in many Chinese dishes, including drunken chicken (poached chicken soaked overnight in rice wine), a Shanghai classic. As Grace Young, a *SAVEUR*

Aged to Perfection We sampled these varieties of shaoxing jiu, produced by Pagoda, a reputable vintner. **EIGHT-YEAR-OLD:** Creamy and smoky; tinged with caramel. **TEN-YEAR-OLD:** Round and drinkable, with a mellow disposition. **20-YEAR-OLD:** Dark and heavy; reminiscent of soy sauce. —T.C.

Clockwise from upper left: Grace Young at Mark's Wine & Spirits; a bottle of 20-year-old shaoxing; various shaoxings; Mark's Wine & Spirits, in New York City.

KITCHEN



HOW TO CARVE A TURKEY

1 | Steadying the turkey with a carving fork, remove the leg at its joint with a sharp knife; separate the drumstick from the thigh. **2** | Slice the thigh into strips parallel to the bone; slice the drumstick while holding it upright. **3** | Remove the wing at its joint (you may have to dig a little). **4** | Make a long horizontal cut at the bottom of the breast (this will allow the breast meat to fall away easily when sliced). **5** | Using an even, downward stroking motion, cut the breast into slices. **6** | Repeat with the turkey's other side; arrange slices neatly on a serving platter.

Bird Call

True-life tales of turkeys in trouble



MARY CLINGMAN, a “turkey talker” on the Butterball Turkey Talk-Line (1-800/BUTTERBALL) for 22 years and its director for the past five, says it receives more than 100,000 calls

between November 1 and December 29 each year. We couldn't resist asking her for some war stories.

Do people tend to lose their minds around the holidays? Absolutely! One lady was bragging that she kept her turkey in a snowbank, but it dawned on her that it had snowed again the night before and she had no clue where her turkey was. She hung up on us.

Have you ever rerouted calls to 911?

Well, one guy was cutting his turkey with a chain saw, but no one was injured. And another guy lined the bottom of his grill with cat litter to keep it clean. His wife called and said, “What do you know about cat litter?” I said, “Not a whole lot.”

Do callers still surprise you?

Oh, yes! One caller thawed a turkey in their bathtub, and her kids took a bubble bath with it. Some people scrub their turkeys with scouring powder.

Can you save a turkey after that kind of trauma? A lot of rinsing is involved. —Liz Pearson

Perfect Poaching

Several years ago, when I was a private chef, I was asked one morning to poach eggs for breakfast. No problem, I thought. But when I dropped the first egg into the simmering water, the yolk and white spread out into an amorphous mess. Same thing on the next try. My eyes widened in panic. What was going wrong? Later, I called my friend Ted MacLeod, an expert brunch cook. “The secret to poaching eggs,” Ted told me, “is in the amount of vinegar you use. The right amount coaxes them into firmness.” I tried his method—a half cup of white distilled vinegar and a half teaspoon of salt in four cups of water—and, sure enough, my poached eggs came out beautifully. Months afterward, though, I ran into another problem. I was using a skillet to poach eggs and noticed that when I dropped the eggs into the water they flattened into dispiriting disks. Thinking that the outcome might have something to do with the water's depth, I switched to a tall pot, and—voilà!—the eggs gracefully trailed down into the boiling water, forming themselves



into appealing orbs. Still, to this day, my first few poaching attempts sometimes don't turn out right. Another friend, Ashley Berman, a recipe tester, offered consoling advice: “It's just like when you're making pancakes,” she said. “The first few always flop.” Now, those are words to put a perfectionist's mind at ease! (For more on poaching eggs, see recipe on page 68.) —T. C.

KITCHEN

The Sweetest Revenge

How much would *you* pay for a cookie?

THE ARTICLE IN THIS ISSUE about the origins of New York cheesecake (see page 46) got me thinking about dessert recipes and some of the unusual stories attached to them. My favorite is that of the Neiman Marcus cookie, which goes something like this. A woman was having lunch with her daughter at the Neiman Marcus department store in Dallas, Texas. The mother ordered a cookie for dessert, and she liked it so much that she asked for the recipe. The waiter politely informed her that it would cost “two fifty”. She happily agreed to pay, instructing the waiter to add the fee to her store account. Later, she discovered on her monthly bill that the restaurant had charged her \$250, not \$2.50. She called Neiman Marcus to complain, but the store refused to reduce the bill. Infuriated, she decided to mail the recipe to everyone she knew, asking them to mail it to all their acquaintances—and on and on.

A stirring narrative of revenge, to be sure; also an untrue one. The story has been applied to a long line of dessert recipes since the 1940s—via chain letters, newspaper reports, and, most recently, the Internet. The Waldorf-Astoria’s red velvet cake, for instance, was infamously known as the \$100 cake. Over the years the dollar amounts have reflected inflation, but the basic tale of just deserts remains a constant. —*Georgia Freedman*

RECIPE

Neiman Marcus Cookies

MAKES ABOUT 4½ DOZEN

To carry on the tradition of righting Neiman Marcus’s imagined wrong, you may wish to copy this recipe and mail it to all your friends and family.

16 tbsp. (2 sticks) butter
 1 cup sugar
 1 cup packed light brown sugar
 1 tsp. vanilla extract
 2 eggs
 2½ cups oatmeal, processed in blender to a fine powder
 2 cups flour
 1 tsp. baking powder
 1 tsp. baking soda
 ½ tsp. salt
 2 cups (about 12 oz.) semisweet chocolate chips
 1½ cups walnuts, chopped
 4 oz. Hershey’s chocolate, grated

Preheat oven to 375°. Using an electric mixer, cream butter and sugars together in a large bowl until fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add vanilla and eggs and beat until combined, about 30 seconds. Add oatmeal, flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt and beat until combined, about 30 seconds. Stir in chocolate chips, walnuts, and chocolate. Roll dough into 1½” balls and place 2” apart on large baking sheets. Bake until light golden but still soft in the middle, 10–12 minutes. Transfer cookies to a rack and let cool.



ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI



91

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KITCHEN

Tart and Sweet

Gramma Fox's applesauce is a practical and delicious treat



Top, pressing steamed apples through a cone-shaped sieve; above, Jean Fox's eppelsaes, a Pennsylvania German version of applesauce.

ON MY PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN family's table, my grandmother's homemade tart-sweet (not vice versa) applesauce is a staple throughout autumn, but it's the most prominent at

Thanksgiving, when she serves it as a condiment with roast turkey (see recipe, page 62). When my grandmother Jean Reitnauer Fox was young, eppelsaes (as it's called in Pennsylvania German) usually showed up as a dessert, but it eventually joined the ranks of the

METHOD

Jean Fox's Eppelsaes

"What I'm looking for in an apple is something tart, and also something with color—I want the applesauce to have a pink color from the skin. I usually use three kinds. But the most important thing is that at least one is tart. McIntoshes serve that purpose. So let's say 4 rome, 4 mcintosh, and 4 gala. First, I wash the apples, because I'm going to use the skins. Next I cut them into eighths. Then I remove the seeds and cut away the stem and a little bit of the core—not a whole lot, because the pectin is in there and you want that for thickening. I put the apples in a heavy saucepan and add a little water to cover the bottom, put a lid on it, and turn the heat on high to get it steaming and then turn it back to between, oh, medium and medium-high. I stir it occasionally, until it's puffy and soft, maybe 45 minutes. Then I put them into the food mill [Fox uses a cone-shaped sieve and a wooden pestle] and push them through. The skin will stay behind. Now I taste it. I'm looking for sweet and tart—a combination of the two. If it isn't quite tart enough, I add lemon juice, about a tablespoon. Then I add a little sugar, about 2 to 3 teaspoons. When it's time to serve it, I sprinkle a little cinnamon on top. It makes about 6 cups."

traditional sweet-and-sour sides, like pickled red beets and cabbage, that we have with most meals. Wholesome and inexpensive to make, eppelsaes marks the epitome of thrift and practicality, for which the Pennsylvania Germans are legendary, and the technique hasn't budged in generations. When dessert time comes, I always go back for more. —*Kate Fox*

In the Saveur Library

BIRDS OF A FEATHER: SAVING RARE TURKEYS FROM EXTINCTION by Carolyn J. Christman and Robert O. Hawes (The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy, 1999). Vacuum-wrapped self-basters may be the norm these

days, but this book's authors remind us that it hasn't always been so. With breed profiles and explanations of such topics as conservation-friendly breeding techniques and color genetics, it may inspire you to start talking turkey.

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913 All in Wine & Spirits Category

THE PANTRY

A Guide to Resources

*In producing the stories for this issue,
we discovered food products and
kitchenware too good to keep to ourselves.
Please feel free to raid our pantry!*

BY LIZ PEARSON

Fare

The Bouchard Family Farm (800/239-3237; www.ployes.com) in Maine sells silverskin **buckwheat** flour (\$15.00 for a 3-pound bag; ask for "Acadian light buckwheat flour") for making the buckwheat crêpes with pork pâté, as well as its own **ployes** mix (\$12.00 for a 1½-pound bag), to which you just add water. To learn more about the **Le Fooding** movement and its events, visit the French-only website www.lefooding.com.

List

To set your table like ours, contact Imports from Marrakesh (212/675-9700) for the Moroccan tea glasses, Simon Pearce (877/452-7763; www.simonpearce.com) for the Brookfield Bakeware large dish, the Real Mother Goose gallery (800/968-1070; www.therealmothergoose.com) for Dale Larson's wooden bowls, Heath Ceramics (415/332-3732; www.heathceramics.com) for the Chez Panisse dinnerware, John Derian Company (212/677-3917; www.johnderian.com) for the History of Plants platter, Fishs Eddy (212/420-9020; www.fishseddy.com) for the oval Green Band platter, Crate & Barrel (800/967-6696; www.crateandbarrel.com) for the Nora wineglasses, KitchenDirect (800/375-3128; www.kitchendirect.com) for the Ravenscroft trumpet decanter, WMF USA (800/999-6347; www.wmf-usa.com) for the Nortica flatware, and John Derian Dry Goods (212/677-8408; www.johnderian.com) for the Vagabond Vintage Furnishings napkins.

Kitchenwise

Jenny Rogers and Clove Galilee's New York City kitchen contains the following items: Miele dishwasher (800/843-7231; www.miele.com), Verona gas oven and stovetop (www.veronaappliances.com), Liebherr refrigerator (866/543-2437; www.liebherr-appliances.com), and IKEA cabinets and faucet (800/434-4532; www.ikea.com). The kitchen was designed by Rogers and her interior-design company, Uncommon Abode (212/529-8696; www.uncommonabode.com).

Cellar

For the moulin-à-vent **wines** listed in our tasting notes, contact the following: Veritas Imports (877/205-3803) for Domaine de la Rochelle; Kermit Lynch (510/524-1524) for Domaine Diochon Cuvée Vieilles Vignes; Louis/Dressner Selections (212/334-8191) for Domaine du Granit; Weygandt-Metzler (610/486-0700) for Domaine du Vissoux Rocheigrès; W. J. Deutsch & Sons Ltd. (914/251-9463) for Georges DuBoeuf Domaine des Rosiers; Wine Traditions (703/333-2853) for Gérard Charvet La Réserve d'Amélie; Dreyfus, Ashby & Co. (212/818-0770) for Joseph Drouhin; Kobrand (212/490-9300) for Louis Jadot Clos de la Roche and Louis Jadot Clos de Rocheigrès; Boisset Vins & Spiritueux (415/289-4500) for Mommessin Les Canneliers and Mommessin Réserve du Domaine de Champ de Cour; and Frederick Wildman and Sons (800/733-9463) for Potel-Aviron.

Shanghai

Adriana's Caravan (800/316-0820; www.adrianascaravan.com) carries Chinese **rice wine** (\$4.50 for a 25.4-ounce bottle; ask for Pagoda brand "shaoxing jiu") for making the chilled drunken chicken with

rice wine granita and the Shanghai-style hot and sour soup. It also sells meiguilu **jiu liquor** (\$29.00 for a 750-ml bottle; also known as mei kuei lu chiew; it cannot be shipped to all locations, so call for details) and dried **wolfberries** (\$7.90 for a 12-ounce package) for making the chilled drunken chicken with rice wine granita, as well as dried wood ear **mushrooms** (\$3.00 for a 1-ounce package), dried shiitake **mushrooms** (\$3.25 for a 1-ounce package), **hot bean sauce** (\$3.90 for a 16-ounce jar), and chinkiang **vinegar** (\$4.95 for a 21-ounce bottle) for making the Shanghai-style hot and sour soup. Buy **five-spice powder** (\$2.50 for a 1-ounce jar) and **shiso leaves** (\$1.98 for a dozen) from Adriana's Caravan (above) to make the smoked duck eggs with caviar as well. You'll also need **duck eggs** (\$6.80 for ten) for the smoked duck eggs with caviar. Order them from D'Artagnan (800/327-8246), and order **caviar** (\$60.00 for a 30-gram jar) from Sterling Caviar (800/525-0333; www.sterlingcaviar.com).

Turkey

Sur La Table (800/243-0852; www.surlatable.com) sells excellent single-use **brining bags** (\$7.95 each) for making the brined and roasted turkey. To make the Salvadoran turkey sandwich, buy the **annatto seeds** (\$2.55 for a 4-ounce package) you'll need from Kitchen/Market (888/468-4433; www.kitchenmarket.com).

Louisiana Bayou

Cajun Grocer (888/272-9347; www.cajungrocer.com) sells Cajun-style **smoked pork** (\$5.75 per pound; ask for "tasso") for the poached eggs with tasso and hollandaise sauce. Order light muscovado **sugar** (\$5.50 for a 1-pound bag) to make the broiled grapefruit and the pigs' ears from New York City's SoHo location of Dean & DeLuca (212/431-1691), which also carries stone-ground **grits** (\$3.50 for a 12-ounce package) for making the sausages and gravy with stone-ground grits.

Madrid

To buy both Spanish extra-virgin **olive oil** (\$18.95 for a 25-ounce bottle) to make the sizzling shrimp with garlic and parsley and Spanish **olive oil** (\$29.00 for a 3-liter can) to make the tapas-style meatballs and the ham and shrimp croquettes, contact La Tienda

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(800/710-4304; www.latienda.com). It also sells 6-inch **cazuelas** (\$24.00 for a package of four) for making the sizzling shrimp with garlic and parsley and the tapas-style meatballs, sliced **serrano** ham (\$16.95 for an 8-ounce package) for making the ham and shrimp croquettes, and chunks of **serrano** ham (\$38.00 for a 1½-pound piece), Spanish blood **sausage** (ask for “*morcilla*”) and Spanish **chorizo** (\$39.75 for a 4-pound package that contains both), and thin dried Spanish **noodles** (\$9.95 for six 8.8-ounce packages; ask for “*fideos*”) for making the Madrid-style boiled dinner. Kitchen/Market (888/468-4433; www.kitchenmarket.com) sells the dried **guindilla chiles** (\$5.95 for a 2-ounce package) you’ll need to make the sizzling shrimp with garlic and parsley. To purchase **flan molds** (\$2.25 for each 3¼-inch mold) to make the creamy caramel custard, contact The Spanish Table (505/986-0243; www.spanishtable.com).

Cafe Annie

The next time you’re in Houston, stop by **Cafe Annie** for a memorable meal (1728 Post Oak Boulevard, Houston, Texas; 713/840-1111; www.cafe-annie.com). Kitchen/Market (888/468-4433; www.kitchenmarket.com) carries dried **guajillo chiles** (\$3.20 for a 2-ounce package), dried **ancho chiles** (\$3.60 for a 2-ounce package), and **cotija** cheese (\$5.95 for a 1-pound package) for making both the black bean nachos with red chile beef and the rabbit enchiladas with red mole. It also sells Mexican **chorizo** (\$4.50 for a 15-ounce package) for the black bean nachos with red chile beef and dried **pasilla chiles** for the rabbit enchiladas with red mole (\$4.55 for a 2-ounce package).

Kitchen

To purchase an array of Chinese **rice wines**, stop by Mark’s Wine & Spirits in New York City’s Chinatown (53 Mott Street, New York City; 212/962-1982). When you’re not in that neck of the woods, find Chinese rice wines at your local Asian liquor store or contact Adriana’s Caravan (800/316-0820; www.adrianascaravan.com) to order a high-quality rice wine (\$4.50 for a 25.4-ounce bottle; ask for Pagoda brand “*shaoxing jiu*”) for making the dishes in the Shanghai feature (see page 48).

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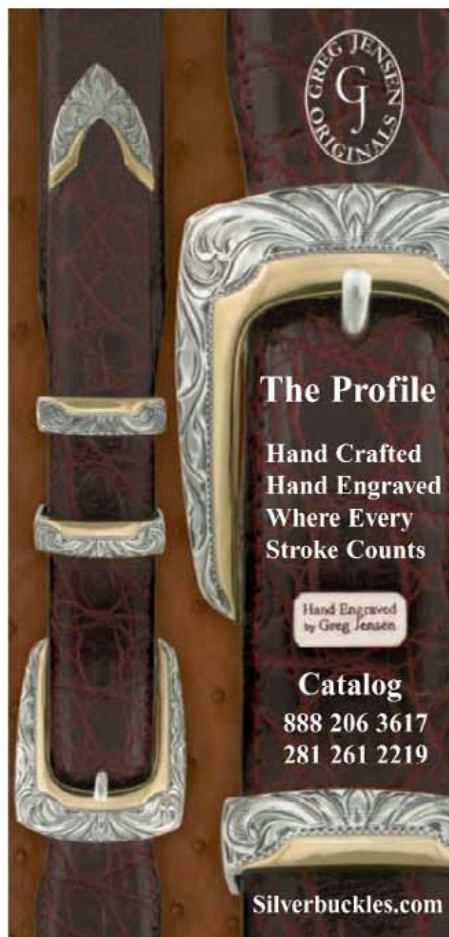


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